105 port subject to her unrestricted sovereignty. In spite of these difficulties, which placed her at a serious disadvantage as compared with Estonia and Latvia, the success of Lithuania in organizing the country commercially, developing agricultural production, and finding foreign markets for dairy produce has been remarkable.

Nor are the problems of external and internal policy by any means identical in the three countries. But there are certain factors in the situation of all three of them which tend to link them together—in the minds of the outside world at any rate, and to some extent even in their own.

105 The three Baltic States were all until recently part of the Russian
●648 Empire. They form, in effect, although Lithuania has no common
131 frontier with the Soviet Union, a buffer between Germany and Russia. As such, they are as much the potential battle-field for a clash between these two great ideological protagonists as they are the potential victims of agreement between them for their partition. Geographically, they occupy the seaboard and cover a territory which in the past were regarded in Germany as a natural field for trade and colonization, and in Russia as an essential, if not a vital, outlet to the Baltic Sea. After the War, the Revolution, and the attainment of independence by the three States, the Soviet Union's Baltic seaboard was reduced to less than one hundred miles at the head of the Gulf of Finland, and the natural lines of communication from central Russia to the sea-ports of Tallinn (Reval), Paldiski (Baltic Port), Riga, and Liepāja (Libau) were blocked by the new frontiers.

Their geographical position has also exposed them to propaganda in favour of the political doctrines of their neighbours. In the immediate post-war period Bolshevism contributed the principal source of anxiety; Germany at that time was still weakened by defeat. From 1933 onwards a new preoccupation in the form of National-Socialism came upon them from the West. Thus, in the political sphere their perpetual lot seems to be the steering of a difficult course between Scylla and Charybdis.

105 In the economic sphere also Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania share many problems in common; the dislocation caused by the War and the Soviet Revolution, by the agrarian reform and the loss of former markets and their natural hinterland in Russia and Poland across the new frontiers, has borne heavily upon them; all three States have populations predominantly engaged in agriculture; all have striven hard to intensify agrarian production, discover new markets, and
[474] develop their industry. Co-operative organization, especially as regards agriculture, is an outstanding feature in all three countries, and has played an important part in the development of production; shortage of capital has equally been a cause of retarding it.

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A. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

162 Until the twelfth century the marshes and forest-lands along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea were left in the more or less undisturbed possession of a number of pagan tribes. The Esths and Livs[1] in the northern regions belonged to the Finnish branch of the Ural-Altaic family, while another group farther to the south, subdivided into Letts, Borussians, and Lithuanians, besides a number of other branches, was of Indo-European stock. The Borussians, who moved southward to what is now East Prussia, were early subdued and assimilated by the Germans, while the Letts tended to push northward into Livonia.

797 167 *The Teutonic Orders.* The first invaders of these regions were the Danes, who conquered the northern half of Estonia in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. German merchants and missionaries had meanwhile penetrated into Livonia, where a bishopric was established at Riga in 1201. From then onwards the greater part of the areas now occupied by the States of Latvia and Estonia gradually fell under the dominion first of the Knights of the Sword, and then of the Order of Teutonic Knights, to whom, in 1346, the Danes sold their share of Estonia. These Orders colonized the territory, converted the inhabitants to Christianity, and made them their serfs. Their lineal descendants, the Baltic Barons, maintained their position as the land-owning class until recent times, in spite of the fact that the territory eventually passed into the hands of Sweden and Poland, and finally into those of Russia.

In Lithuania, on the other hand, the Teutonic Knights were never able to make much headway except in the Memel territory, of which the frontier was permanently fixed after the defeat of the Order at Tannenberg in 1410 by Vytautas—one of a succession of Lithuanian Grand Dukes who, in the course of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, built up a united and powerful State and helped to check the Tartar invasion of Europe.

● 548 *Poland and Sweden (1386–1709).* After the death of Vytautas in 1430, Lithuania rapidly fell into a position of dependence on Poland, with which country she had already been nominally connected under

197 162 [1] According to Prince P. A. Kropotkin the native language of the Livs was of Finnish origin, though they now speak a Lettish *patois*. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, vol. xvi, p. 817.) The Livs are now practically extinct, though there is a small community of them, some 1,500 strong, in modern Latvia.

a personal union since 1386. In 1569, under the Union of Lublin, she lost her independence altogether, and until the partitions of Poland in 1772–93 she shared a common history with that country. One of the most enduring results of the Polish régime was the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in what had hitherto been a practically pagan State, at a time when Lutheranism was being introduced by the Baltic Barons in Livonia and Estonia.[1]

In the sixteenth century the power of the Teutonic Knights in the latter Provinces began to weaken under repeated assaults from the Russians, which reached their high-water-mark under Ivan the Terrible between 1558 and 1584. In 1521 Estonia had already accepted the protection of Sweden; and in 1560, after the dissolution of the Teutonic Order, Poland annexed Courland and Livonia, although a large part of the latter was afterwards wrested from her by the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, in 1626. The districts which thus came under Swedish rule enjoyed a somewhat more liberal régime than had hitherto been their lot. The privileges of the Baltic Barons were curtailed, and something was done towards national education—it was during this period that the University of Dorpat was founded in Estonia. In Courland, however, where the Barons were left a very free hand, owing to Poland's preoccupations elsewhere, the peasants were no better treated during this period than they had been before.

Russian Rule (1710–1918). Finally, the eighteenth century saw the defeat of Charles XII by Peter the Great at Poltava (1709) and the gradual passing of control over the Baltic Provinces from the declining Swedish Empire and Poland to Russia.[2] The period of Russian domination, which lasted down to the outbreak of the World War, opened ominously, although conditions improved somewhat during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In Lithuania the partition of Poland was followed by a period of Russification; the Orthodox religion was introduced, and Catholic ecclesiastical property was to a large extent handed over to the Orthodox Church; the University of Vilna and the higher schools were closed, and the use of the Lithuanian language was forbidden in all schools. In 1861 the peasants were liberated and granted the right to hold a small amount of land; but, after the Polish insurrection of 1863, which was sternly suppressed by Muraviev, it was decreed that

[1] Swedish rule was later a decisive factor in the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Estonia.

[2] Riga was captured in 1710 and Reval soon after. Livonia and Estonia were ceded to Russia by the Peace of Nystadt in 1721; Courland gradually became to all intents and purposes a Russian protectorate, and in 1795 formally acknowledged the suzerainty of Catherine the Great. In the course of the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795 the whole of Lithuania proper passed into the hands of Russia, although Memel remained part of Prussia, in which it had been incorporated in the sixteenth century.

726 during the early stages of the Bolshevik Revolution; the fall of the German Empire; and, lastly, the determination of the leaders and soldiers of the Baltic peoples themselves. All but the last of these were events of world magnitude, and beyond the power of those peoples to initiate or to prevent.

726 The military history of the Baltic Provinces in the World War may
● 648 be divided into three phases, corresponding with the three successive tides of armies surging forward, back, and then forward once more, across the border country between Germany and Russia proper.

First, there was the period—short for Lithuania and Courland in the south, relatively long for Livonia and Estonia farther north—when these Provinces were still held by the Russian armies, in whose ranks the Baltic peoples fought loyally.[1] Then came the period of the retreat of the Russians, devastating the country-side as they went, with the Germans hard at their heels. Lithuania and Courland were overrun by German troops by the autumn of 1915. The German advance then came to a halt for a time, and the Russians consolidated their position on a line Riga–Dvinsk–Baranovitchi, which they held for two years. The disintegration of the Russian forces as a result of the March Revolution of 1917 gave opportunity for a fresh drive. On September 3 Ludendorff captured Riga, and by February 1918 the Germans were occupying Livonia and Estonia, and were within a hundred miles of Petrograd. By the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which they were forced to sign on March 3, 1918, the Bolsheviks recognized a temporary German 'police occupation' in Estonia and Livonia until peace and order should have been restored,[2] and ceded to Germany all territories west of the line Riga–Dvinsk–Lyda–Pruzhany, including Courland and Lithuania. It was stated that 'Germany and Austria-Hungary intend to decide the future fate of these territories in harmony with their population'. Although this treaty was eventually rendered ineffective by subsequent events, it is significant as revealing the real nature of Germany's aims at expansion in Eastern Europe.[3]

Finally, with the military defeat of Germany by the Allies and the signature of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, a new phase began, in which the German armies gradually evacuated the Provinces, while the Bolsheviks poured in. This last period was the most terrible of all for the Baltic peoples, who had at the same time to fight the

[1] The part played by two Lettish battalions in the defence of Mitau led, in July 1915, to Russian permission for the formation of a small Lettish national army which distinguished itself on various occasions, and especially by its gallant defence of Riga in 1917.

[2] By the supplementary Agreement of Berlin on August 27, 1918, the R.S.F.S.R. renounced its sovereign rights over Estonia and Livonia.

[3] For a discussion of the implications of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty see J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Forgotten Peace: Brest-Litovsk* (to be published in September 1938 by Macmillan & Co.).

726 Germans and repel the Bolshevik invasion. Without the assistance,
● 648 inadequate though it was, of the Allied Powers, they could hardly have succeeded in establishing their independence.

1. The Fall of the Imperial Government in Russia, 1917

648 It seems clear that, in the days following the March Revolution
186 and the establishment of the Provisional Government in Russia in the spring of 1917, none of the Baltic Provinces contemplated or desired complete detachment from Russia, although they certainly seized the opportunity of making a bid for a measure of autonomy and for much-needed reforms. It was the Bolshevik Revolution at the end of the year that not only enabled, but even forced, them to go farther and to demand complete independence.

648 *Estonia.* The Estonians, who at the time of the March Revolution
186 were as yet free from German occupation, naturally profited the
642 most by the new situation. At the request of their leaders, Prince Lvov issued a decree or 'Special Law' on April 12 granting local autonomy to Estonia, including the island of Oesel and the northern half of Livonia, where the population was Estonian; the old *Landtag* and other local bodies were replaced by a purely titular High Commissioner, to be appointed by the Provisional Government, and it was provided that an Estonian National Council and subordinate local bodies should be elected by universal, direct, secret, and proportional suffrage. The National Council was to draft a constitution for approval by an All-Russian Constituent Assembly. The provisional Government appointed M. Jaan Poska, the mayor of Reval, as High Commissioner, and by a further decree of July 5, 1917, provided for the elections to the National Council on July 7–8. In the Council, which met on July 14 and elected M. Konstantin Paets as its president, the bourgeois parties and the Labour Group held 60 per cent. of the seats, the Social-Democrats and Social-Revolutionaries making up the remaining 40 per cent. In view of the increasingly serious military situation, the Estonian Administration also obtained permission from Petrograd, in the autumn, to organize Estonian contingents under their own officers.

When the Provisional Government gave way before the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in November 1917, the Estonian National Government, taking advantage of Trotsky's declaration of the right of self-determination for dissident nationalities, proclaimed complete political independence of Russia on November 28. The Proclamation[1] also provided for the immediate election of a Constituent Assembly and for the delegation of the Council's powers, 'during the interruption

[1] For text see M. W. Graham, *New Governments of Eastern Europe* (I. Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1928), p. 646.

of its sessions', to a Committee of Elders and to the Administration. 648
The Baltic Barons, on the other hand, declared themselves the sole 186
authorized representatives of the people, proclaimed the definite 642
separation of Estonia from Russia, and appealed to Germany for military aid against the Bolsheviks.

The immediate consequence of the Proclamation of November 28 [669]
was the temporary arrest of M. Paets and the dispersal of the National Council by the Bolsheviks, who, however, allowed the elections to the Constituent Assembly to take place during January 1918, in the hope of getting a majority of votes for their own candidates. When it became clear that they would not do so, a civil war broke out which was only ended by the arrival of the German armies in February. On February 24, the single day left to them between the flight of the Bolsheviks and the coming of the Germans, the Committee of Elders seized the opportunity to promulgate a manifesto reaffirming Estonia's independence as a Republican State, defining her frontiers, and instituting a Provisional Government under M. Paets. The German occupation during the following months postponed all further constitutional development until after the Armistice of November 11, 1918.

Latvia. The history of the Lettish nationalist movement up to the 648
signature of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 ran a some- 186
what similar course, and thereafter suffered a similar temporary 668
eclipse until the Armistice was signed; for, although the southern half of what is now Latvia, with the exception of Latgale, was from the summer of 1915 onwards under German occupation, Lettish nationalists in the northern half and in Petrograd were able to conduct negotiations with the Imperial and Provisional Governments in Russia, and later to defy the Bolshevik authorities in much the same way as did the Estonian leaders, though with rather less success.

Towards the end of the Imperialist régime, when half the inhabi- [675]
tants of Courland were refugees in Russia, the Lettish deputies of the Duma, together with representatives of the exiled Letts, among them J. Čakste and Z. A. Meierovics, formed a Latvian Refugees' Committee in Petrograd, which tried to obtain promises of autonomy and reform from the Government. When the Provisional Government assumed authority in the spring of 1917, they were urged to establish an autonomous administrative district consisting of southern Livonia, Courland, and parts of Vitebsk; less amenable to Lettish than to Estonian entreaties, they did, however, issue decrees appointing new and more democratic-minded governors and permitting elections to local government bodies in the unoccupied districts.

In Latvia, as in Estonia, the Bolshevik Revolution precipitated

matters. On November 16, 1917, representatives of all parties in the unoccupied territory, except the Bolsheviks, met at Walk (in Livonia) and formed a Latvian National Council. Complete independence was implicit, though not explicit, in the declaration of the Council that Latvia was an autonomous unit whose status, and whose domestic and foreign policy, could only be decided by a Latvian Constituent Assembly. Meanwhile, in December, M. Karl Ulmanis and the other Lettish leaders, who had been working under cover in the occupied territory, formed a secret democratic *bloc* in Riga, consisting of all except the Germanophil and Bolshevik groups, which made a declaration similar to that of the National Council at Walk.

The Bolshevik reply to such action was to abolish the local government bodies set up by the Provisional Government, to issue new electoral decrees which excluded the bulk of the peasantry—as being counter-revolutionary in their outlook—from the franchise, to suppress the National Council, and to establish Red Guards throughout the unoccupied districts. But their military situation was becoming desperate; the Germans were advancing, and negotiations for Brest-Litovsk were in process. The Latvian nationalists took courage; on January 5, 1918, the Lettish leader, M. Janis Goldmanis, reaffirmed before the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, convened in Petrograd, the resolutions of the National Council at Walk. The Council itself met again on January 15 in Petrograd to declare Courland, South Livonia, and Latgale an independent democratic Republic, and to create administrative machinery and an embryo Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Almost immediately France granted *de facto* recognition to the new Latvian Government.

[727] By the end of February, however, the whole of Livonia was under German occupation, and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty recognized a German protectorate in Courland and a temporary German 'police occupation' in Livonia. The nationalist movement was driven to ground until after the Armistice, although, in July 1918, the National Council met to proclaim Latvia's independence under an international protectorate, and to send MM. Čakste and Meierovics and other representatives abroad to secure recognition and support from the Allied Powers.

Lithuania. Since practically the whole of Lithuania was in German occupation from the autumn of 1915 onwards, the movement for independence developed there on somewhat different lines from the Latvian and Estonian movements; it was less affected by the political and military history and military fortunes of Russia than by those of Germany. Tolerance of its existence and concessions to its aspirations had to be won, not so much from the Provisional Government or the Bolsheviks, as from the German military author-

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Estonia and Latvia

ities. At first it must have seemed possible to the Lithuanian deputies in the Duma, who, early in 1917, organized a Lithuanian National Council in Petrograd to demand political autonomy, that Russia might yet prove strong enough to protect, and generous enough to grant autonomy to, her border provinces; for, although after the fall of the Imperial Government they notified their compatriots in both German and Russian Lithuania, without permission of the Provisional Government, of the existence of the Lithuanian National Council, and appointed a provisional administrative committee to deal with Lithuanian affairs in Russia, yet, at a general conference of Lithuanians in Petrograd some months later, while extremists were demanding complete independence and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, the more moderate elements were still in favour of a *rapprochement* with the Provisional Government. The latter, however, by ignoring their advances and refusing to make any promises such as had been made to Finland, Poland, or Estonia, lost the last opportunity of keeping the Lithuanian nationalist movement within their control. Finally, when the Bolshevik Government suppressed the Lithuanian National Council, a conference, attended by all but the extreme Left parties, was organized at Voronezh to take its place; this defined the frontiers and outlined the constitutional programme of a new independent Lithuanian Republic, demanded the immediate evacuation of the German armies and free access to the Baltic Sea, and decided to bring its claim to the attention of the Allied Powers.

2. The German Occupation

After suffering the ravages of the retreating Russian army, the Baltic Provinces were subjected, for a period varying from three years in Lithuania and Courland to nearly a year in Estonia and Livonia, to all the miseries of a German military occupation, with its accompaniments of rigorous requisitioning and political terrorization. In spite of its devastating economic effects, however, the German occupation probably saved the Provinces from irretrievable submergence in the Soviet Union, and, as things turned out, by keeping the Bolsheviks out, made independence ultimately possible when the Germans in their turn should have suffered military defeat by the Allies.

Estonia and Latvia. The failure, during this period, of the efforts of the German military authorities, supported by the German-Baltic Barons, to threaten or cajole the peoples of any of the three Provinces into adopting some form of federation with Germany, is an indication that the Baltic races felt that they had more to fear from German than from Russian domination. The German plans

727 included the creation of a Duchy of Courland and a Duchy of Estonia
648 and Livonia in personal union with the Crown of Prussia, and the organization of extensive German colonization in those Provinces. To this end, in each Province the old *Landtag* and *Landesrat*, consisting of representatives of the Baltic Barons, were hastily revived. On March 8, 1918, the *Landesrat* of Courland invited the Kaiser to accept the Grand-ducal crown of Courland; the invitation was graciously accepted. An unsuccessful attempt was made to persuade the district Elders of Estonia and Livonia, summoned to a conference at Riga on April 10 for the purpose, to consent to union with the Prussian Crown; the fear of German colonization was too strong. M. Konstantin Paets, the chief organizer of resistance to such a scheme, was imprisoned in a Polish concentration camp. In default of popular consent, Baron Dellingshausen, the leader of the Baltic Barons in Estonia, sent a request for union to the Kaiser, who conveyed his 'consent' to it on April 21. In July 1918 agrarian regulations were issued providing for a Colonization Union in Courland, at whose disposal the Baltic Barons placed a third of their landed property for the purpose of fresh German colonization: all private land agreements for the last thirty years were to be annulled, without any provision being made for expropriated peasants.

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728 *Lithuania.* In Lithuania, hoping to make capital out of the Russian
649 Provisional Government's unsympathetic attitude towards the
186 Lithuanian nationalists, and with a view to creating a body which
[668] would lend itself to the furtherance of annexation schemes, the German authorities rashly permitted a nationalist movement to take shape in the autumn of 1917. Immediately after the Russian evacuation of Vilna, a conference of over 200 leaders, selected by an organizing committee, met there and passed a resolution that Lithuania should become an independent democratic State within her ethnographic frontiers, and that a Constituent Assembly should be convened. The conference appointed, for the conduct of affairs in the interim period, a National Council or *Taryba*, consisting of twenty-six members, including six representatives of minorities, with M. Antanas Smetona as its president. Under German pressure, the *Taryba* adopted further resolutions on December 11, which, while claiming the reconstitution of an independent State with Vilna as its capital, omitted all mention of a Constituent Assembly, and even asked for German aid during the period of reconstruction in the form of a 'perpetual and solid alliance' with the German Empire. In a rescript of March 23, 1918, the Kaiser granted *de jure* recognition of Lithuanian independence on the basis of the December resolutions; but by this time the *Taryba*, realizing the character of the peace negotiations with Russia at Brest-Litovsk, to which they had been refused per-

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mission to send a delegate, had made a new official declaration of Lithuanian independence on February 16, 1918, this time on the basis of the original Vilna resolutions of September 1917, with a renewed demand for a Constituent Assembly.

The German General Staff now conceived the idea of a personal union of Lithuania with Saxony, under a monarchical government. In order to thwart this plan, and under pressure from the clerical party in Germany, the *Taryba*, on June 14, 1918, invited the Catholic Duke William of Urach—alleged to be a Württemberg descendant of the old Lithuanian king Mindaugas—to ascend the throne of an independent Lithuania as Mindaugas II. The invitation was accepted, in spite of the strong opposition of a section of the *Taryba* itself, not to mention that of the German General Staff. But, with military defeat growing daily more certain, the latter's authority was beginning to wane, and on October 20 the new Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, informed the *Taryba* that it had been decided to delegate full legislative and administrative power to a Lithuanian Government, as soon as it should be constituted, and to remove the German occupying forces as soon as possible. The *Taryba*, therefore, on November 2, withdrew the invitation to the Duke of Urach, leaving the form of government to be decided by the future Constituent Assembly. Meanwhile, constituting itself as the legislative body, it elected a triumvirate, consisting of MM. Smetona, Staugaitis, and Šilingas, who on November 5 invited M. Voldemaras to form a non-party Cabinet and to negotiate with the various nationalities.

3. The German Evacuation and the Bolshevik Invasion

As soon as the Armistice of November 11, 1918, was signed, the leaders in each country set about the task of organizing their respective administrations, consolidating the political independence of the new Governments, and finally drafting constitutions.

The Estonian National Council met on November 20, 1918, after nine months' rustication; M. Paets was released from imprisonment, and the Government set up under him on February 24 was confirmed in its authority.

In Latvia, M. Karl Ulmanis's democratic *bloc* was now joined by the members of the Latvian Refugees' Committee and of the Latvian National Council from Petrograd, and an all-Latvian Council of State was formed of some 100 members of all parties, except the Social-Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks.[1] The Assembly met at Riga on November 18, 1918, elected M. Čakste as its president, and formed

[1] About two-thirds of the seats, which were allotted according to the votes received by these parties in the elections under the Provisional Government, were held by peasants and workers, while the remaining third of the members were merchants, manufacturers, and representatives of the national minorities.

642 a Provisional Government with M. Ulmanis as Prime Minister and
646 M. Meierovics as Foreign Minister, pending the convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

642 In Lithuania, M. Sleževičius became Prime Minister in the Cabinet formed in November 1918 by M. Voldemaras, when the latter left to attend the Peace Conference in Paris. A provisional National Assembly, the 200 members of which were chosen by mass meetings all over the country, met in Kaunas (Kovno)[1] from January 17 to 23, 1919, to draft a republican constitution and to re-elect and expand the *Taryba*; M. Smetona was elected President of the State on April 4.

728 Before the constitutions could be drafted, however, the new
648 Provisional Governments had to concentrate their whole energies on the military situation brought about by the Armistice of November 1918. The Armistice Convention had provided that the German troops were to evacuate all territories which were formerly a part of the Russian Empire 'as soon as the Allies shall consider this desirable, having regard to the interior conditions of those territories' (Article 12), and were to 'cease at once all requisitions, seizures, or coercive measures for obtaining supplies intended for Germany in . . . Russia' (Article 14). It was the intention of the Allies that the German forces should do their utmost to stem the Bolshevik advance, and that, when their services were no longer needed, they should withdraw from the Baltic Provinces without reaping any political reward for their efforts. This was clearly too much to expect, and the Germans, by withdrawing rapidly and without permission in November 1918, and by removing all supplies of arms, food, and even rolling-stock as they went, in violation of Article 14, not only facilitated the Bolshevik invasion, but did their best to put the new Baltic Governments in the position of having to turn to them for assistance.

648 At the end of November the Red Armies had begun to penetrate
721 into Estonia from Narva and the Finnish coast; on January 5, 1919, they were in Vilna, and the Lithuanian Government had retired to Kaunas, while the Latvian Government had been driven from Riga to take refuge at Liepāja (Libau). By the end of February the Bolsheviks had overrun Latvia and a large part of Lithuania.

[723] In Estonia, General Laidoner and Captain Pitka organized an army and marine force from the remnants of the Estonian regiments of 1917, and—with the aid of Finnish loans and volunteers, gifts of ammunition and foodstuffs from Great Britain, and the occasional presence of British warships in Tallinn (Reval) and Liepāja under Admiral Sinclair—put up a heroic resistance, and by the beginning of February 1919 had temporarily cleared the country.

[1] Vilna was then occupied by the Bolsheviks.

For a short time Estonian troops supported General Yudenich's north-western corps of the White Russian Army, assisting on May 25 in the capture of Pskov. Since, however, both he and Admiral Kolchak were absolutely opposed to the recognition of the independent Republics, the Estonians withdrew their troops during the Bolshevik counter-offensive and recapture of Pskov in August. Thereupon the Allies sent a British general to Tallinn on August 10 to compel Yudenich to form a 'North-western Government' and sign a treaty with the Estonians. After the failure of Yudenich's second offensive in October, when his troops actually reached the suburbs of Petrograd, he retired once more into Estonia, and his army was finally dispersed.

In Latvia, where an army had been organized under Colonel Kalpaks, and later under General Balodis, reinforced by the German-Baltic *Landeswehr*, a new situation was created in February 1919 by the arrival of the German commander, General von der Goltz, ostensibly in accordance with the terms of the Armistice, but actually with the intention of coming to an understanding with the White Russian armies, driving out the Bolsheviks, and finally restoring German control over the Baltic States. With his assistance the German Balts in Latvia carried out a *coup d'état* at Liepāja, arrested the Latvian Government on April 16, and set up a new Government with a Latvian Pastor, M. A. Niedra, as its nominal head. Von der Goltz then proceeded northwards, and with the aid of the Latvian troops, who saw that the first necessity was to drive out the Bolsheviks, recaptured Riga on May 23 and drove the Red Armies to the frontier. A realignment of troops now took place; the Latvian and Estonian national forces combined to clear Livonia of Bolshevik troops, then turned on von der Goltz and the German Balts, defeated them at Cēsis (Wenden) on June 21, and drove them out of Northern Latvia.

Intervention by the Allied Powers. Perceiving at last the danger of relying on Germany to carry out the terms of the Armistice in the Baltic States, the Allied Powers decided on May 23, 1919, to send an Allied Military Mission, under General Sir Hubert Gough, to deal with the local German command. They had already sent Notes on April 23 and May 4 demanding the reinstatement of the Latvian Government, and, on June 18, Marshal Foch ordered the Germans to stop all farther advance towards Estonia and to begin immediate evacuation of the Baltic region. As a result of Allied intervention, von der Goltz was forced to evacuate Riga and sign an armistice on July 3, and four days later the Latvian Government was reinstated there. Hitherto, all the protests of the Allied Powers had been disregarded by the German military authorities, but, when a further

●648 remonstrance of August 1 was also ignored, the Supreme Council finally threatened to use economic pressure to enforce evacuation. At the suggestion of the German Government, a Mixed Commission was then formed which proceeded to Berlin, and thence to Tilsit in November, to deal with the question.

[721] Meanwhile, General von der Goltz had been replaced by the adventurer Avalov-Bermondt, who in October besieged Riga. This attack was successfully resisted, and as a result of the efforts of the Mixed Commission, the German evacuation now began in earnest; by the middle of December it was complete throughout the Baltic States.

648 728 *Peace Treaties and Recognition by Foreign Powers.* It yet remained to expel the last remnants of the Bolshevik armies; but in January 1920 the Latvian troops, aided by Poland, succeeded in clearing Latgale, and by that time Estonia was already negotiating peace with Soviet Russia. She had refused a separate armistice offered by the latter at Pskov in September 1919, fearing an attempt to weaken, by disuniting, the Succession States; but, on December 31 of that year, in the face of a Soviet refusal to conduct joint negotiations with all three Governments at once, MM. Poska and Piip consented to a separate armistice, and on February 2, 1920, the Treaty of Tartu (Dorpat) was signed, whereby the R.S.F.S.R. accorded *de jure* recognition to Estonia's independence. Lithuania followed suit with the Treaty of Moscow on July 12, 1920, and Latvia on August 11, 1920, with the Treaty of Riga.[1]

It remained for Estonia to fix with Latvia their mutual frontier, and to settle the disputed question of the town of Valga (Walk), which was finally partitioned between the two countries by a Convention of March 22, 1920, through the mediation of Colonel Tallents. Latvia made peace with Germany by a Protocol of July 15, 1920; the delimitation of the Latvian-Lithuanian frontier by a court of arbitration, under the presidency of Sir James Simpson, was not completed until March 1921.

Lithuania was less fortunate, since, even after the Russian evacuation, her eastern and western frontiers were still in dispute. Vilna, which she regarded as her capital, was also claimed by Poland; and when the Bolsheviks had evacuated the city it was the Poles and not the Lithuanians who entered it on April 20, 1919. The fortunes of the city and district of Vilna during the Soviet-Polish war, which continued until the autumn of 1920, are related elsewhere.[2] Poland's final settlement of the question in her own favour by the Zeligowski *coup* of October 6, 1920, was ultimately recognized by the Conference

[1] For the terms of these settlements, see below, pp. 65–6.
[2] For the history of the Vilna controversy, see below, pp. 89–93.

of Ambassadors on March 15, 1923. On the western frontier, 648 ●
Lithuania was more successful; the Allies had compelled Germany to 728
cede the Memel area to them with a view to its later cession to [167]
Lithuania, but, while they were still negotiating on the subject, the Lithuanian Government took matters into its own hands, and on January 10, 1923, sent troops to occupy the area by force. This *fait accompli* was recognized by the Allies in the Memel Convention of 1924.[1]

One of the last acts of the Estonian Committee of Elders before 648
the exchange of Bolshevik for German terrorization in 1918, had been the issue of a declaration that 'Estonia must immediately be declared a neutral country, and to this end international guarantees must be sought from foreign Powers'. They had followed this up by sending representatives abroad to secure support and recognition from the Allies, and the Latvian and Lithuanian National Assemblies had pursued the same policy. At that time the Allied Powers were glad enough to do what little they could in the way of moral encouragement of any organization which was in conflict with Bolshevism.[2] *De jure* recognition of the Baltic States was delayed, however, owing to the persistent hope entertained by the Allied Powers in general, and by President Wilson in particular—a hope encouraged by Kolchak and the Russian reactionaries—that the Bolshevik régime might yet be destroyed. The Powers would have liked, therefore, to preserve a territorially indivisible Russia which could ultimately be handed back intact in the event of some form of constitutional monarchy being established. But the treaties concluded between the Baltic States and Soviet Russia in 1920, and the disappearance of the last hopes of a successful intervention, paved the way at last for the acceptance of the new order as a permanent one. Great Britain and France granted *de jure* recognition to Estonia and Latvia on January 26, 1921; and, on September 22 of the same year, the three Baltic States were admitted as Members of the League of Nations, although Lithuania did not, owing to the Vilna controversy, receive *de jure* recognition from Great Britain and France until December 20, 1922.[3]

Constitutions Adopted. Meanwhile, the new Governments had 642
been pushing forward with the work of reconstruction and constitution-drafting, in so far as circumstances permitted. In Estonia a Constituent Assembly was elected in April 1919; the Paets Cabinet resigned, and was replaced by a new bourgeois coalition Government

[1] For an examination of the Memel question, see below, pp. 98–102.

[2] A limited and provisional *de facto* recognition was accorded to Estonia by France and Great Britain in March, and by Italy in May 1918; to Latvia by France in January, and by Great Britain in November 1918; and to Lithuania by Great Britain in September 1919.

[3] The U.S.A. delayed recognition of all three States until July 27, 1922.

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1938 R21 Baltic States RB1
Latvia

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allotted to each minority for educational purposes, and the compulsory elementary schools were to be maintained by the State, while no obstacles were to be placed in the way of the establishment of any number of private schools. Up till now such councils have been formed for the German, Russian, White Russian, Jewish, and Polish groups. The Germans appear to be satisfied with the system, but the Russians complain that they receive less than their fair share of the State subsidies, and that the local government bodies, which are composed chiefly of Letts, do not provide enough Russian schools.[1]

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In response to the League's request for a declaration guaranteeing minority rights, Latvia only consented, after protracted negotiations, to make a general Declaration, on July 7, 1923; this proposed that the subject should be regarded as closed, while acknowledging the League Council's right to take up the question again if at any time the situation of the minorities should not 'appear to correspond to the general principles laid down in the various minority Treaties', and admitting the right of the minorities themselves to send petitions to the Council.[2] Latvia also accepted the principle of the League's guarantee, but not the obligatory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice, in place of which she agreed that, if necessary, an advisory opinion might be obtained.

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The situation of the minorities in general, while very favourable under the earlier Agrarian Ministries—so much so that they frequently had representatives in the Cabinet—on the whole deteriorated gradually from about 1929 onwards. In August of that year the Celmins Ministry, which had decided to grant a subsidy towards the erection of a German war memorial, was only saved from defeat

minority concerned. The chairman would represent his nationality in all cultural questions, and would participate in an advisory capacity in the sessions of the Cabinet whenever those questions were under consideration.

[1] TABLE 4. *Minorities and Education in Latvia.*

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Type of school	*Year*	*Total no. of schools*	*Lettish*	*Language of Instruction*							
				Great Russian	*White Russian*	*German*	*Polish*	*Jewish*	*Lithuanian*	*Estonian*	*Diverse*
Primary	1928–9	1,931	1,410	229	31	91	34	80	7	4	45
„	1935–6	1,907	1,461	173	13	77	21	67	11	4	80
Secondary	1928–9	137	81	14	3	13	3	22	1	..	2
„	1935–6	122	87	8	..	10	3	12	1	..	3
		students									
University	1929–30	8,237	6,865	171	..	418	36	726	46	19	3
„	1935–6	7,203	6,103	195	..	334	39	510	30	17	4

[2] Since the Declaration of 1923, only one petition has been lodged (by German nationals) against Latvia, in April 1925, relating to agrarian reform. Previous to it there had been two German petitions on the same subject, in November 1920 and February 1921, and one Jewish petition relating to general minority treatment in September 1921. None of these petitions was brought before the Council.

563 Educational Board was abolished, and special officials (a German,
571 a Russian, a Pole, and a Jew) have since been put in charge of the
191 educational affairs of their respective national groups. A further blow was struck with the issue of a new decree in January 1935, requiring all public and private economic undertakings to keep their books and conduct their correspondence and general business in the Lettish language. In June twelve Polish schools were closed.

563 Finally, on New Year's Day of 1936, came the unkindest cut of all,
475 when decrees were issued setting up State Chambers of Trade and of
● 678 Industry and Commerce, and providing for the eventual dissolution of other economic organizations such as the German guilds, which had existed for some 700 years, and the transfer of their property to the new Chambers or to the local administrations. This measure aroused the resentment not only of the German minority in Latvia, which presented a memorandum on the question to the Government, but also of the German Government, which took up the cudgels on their behalf. On January 16, 1936, the Latvian Minister in Berlin handed in a protest against the violent anti-Latvian press campaign which ensued; on the 22nd the German Minister in Riga called on President Ulmanis, but the latter protested firmly against any German interference in Latvian affairs. Soon after, in March, a secret organization believed to have connexions with Germany was discovered; the arrest of some thirty-five German Balts followed, and, on April 1, a decree was issued dissolving all the economic organizations which had not already complied with the economic decrees of the previous January.[1]

Estonia. The bulk of the Estonians themselves belong to the small
565 peasant class, which was emancipated from serfdom in the last cen-
563 tury; a few are labourers and artisans, and there is a small middle
162 class. The national minorities, which in 1934 amounted to 11·8 per cent. of the total population of 1,107,059,[2] consist chiefly of Russians, Germans, Swedes, and Jews. Nearly three-quarters of the Russians are poor peasants living in the eastern frontier districts, the other

[1] The famous Riga *Gesterbeverein* was spared, as being a purely cultural union.

[2] TABLE 5. *Population of Estonia According to Race.*

Race	1922		1934	
	Number	Percentage of total	Number	Percentage of total
Estonian . . .	970,707	87·68	997,923	88·2
German . . .	16,319	1·66	16,346	1·5
Russian . . .	91,109	8·23	92,656	8·5
Swedish . . .	7,850	0·71	7,641	0·7
Jewish . . .	4,566	0·41	4,434	0·4
Others . . .	14,508	1·31	7,190	0·7

provision for compulsory religious instruction. In February 1923, 659
however, a Bill submitted to a referendum by the Christian-Democratic party (Lutheran), making religious instruction free and compulsory, was adopted by 330,000 votes to 130,000.[1] In 1926 a Law on the Religious Communities was passed, disestablishing and disendowing all religious bodies, while permitting them full autonomy and freedom to carry on their spiritual tasks. Under the dictatorship, however, a new law of 1934 imposed a certain degree of State control over the churches. Their statutes were subject to confirmation by the Government, and the decisions of the Church Councils could be vetoed by the Minister of the Interior, while the President of the State might require the appointment of other or additional candidates at the elections of the heads of the churches. All priests and [793]
divines must be Estonian citizens, and services must be held in the language of the parishioners, except where ancient church languages were used. The churches were allowed their own courts, whose decisions might be provided with an executionary clause by the lay courts.

Latvia. Since the time of the Reformation, when the Baltic Barons 795
changed over from the Roman Catholic to the Lutheran faith, the 162
majority of the inhabitants have been Lutherans. The Province of Latgale, however, owing to its historic connexion with Poland, has remained Catholic to this day. During the period of Russian rule the Orthodox Church enjoyed a privileged position.

Complete religious liberty exists in Latvia to-day. The churches 659
are autonomous, but they receive small State subsidies, and clerical affairs are subject to the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. In view of the large Catholic population in Latgale, the Government [648] ●
signed a Concordat with the Vatican on May 30, 1922,[2] recognizing the Catholic Church as a corporate body, and establishing an Archbishopric at Riga, with the stipulation that the Archbishop must be a Latvian citizen and his appointment subject to the Government's consent.

Lithuania. Owing to its long historical connexion with Poland, 795
Lithuania has remained almost entirely Roman Catholic to this day. 659
In the Constitution of 1922 the State recognized the equal right of all religious organizations to administer their affairs, to publish their doctrines, and to acquire property. Religious education was to be [794]
compulsory in schools other than those established for the children of undenominational parents, and was to be in accordance with the requirements of the religious organization to which the student belonged.

[1] The result of the plebiscite was a defeat for the Government, which had previously rejected the Bill; in accordance with the Constitution, therefore, the State Assembly was dissolved, and new elections were held.

[2] A Supplementary Convention was signed during M. Munters' recent visit to Rome in January 1938.

requirements of the religious organization to which the student belonged.

The clerical Christian-Democratic party in Lithuania, which was also a nationalist and agrarian group, has played a far more important part in political life than its Lutheran counterparts in Latvia and Estonia; indeed, it was the dominant partner in every Government during the parliamentary phase, except for the short-lived Populist-Socialist Cabinet of June–December 1926. In spite of this fact, relations with the Vatican were for a long time extremely acrimonious, largely as a result of the Concordat concluded in 1925 between Poland and the Vatican, whereby the latter recognized the Vilna district as a Polish diocese. Popular indignation at the failure of the Government to change this situation was exploited by the Opposition in the elections of 1926 to secure the defeat of the Christian-Democrats, who, however, supported the Voldemaras Government formed in the following December. A Concordat was eventually negotiated in September 1927, whereby the limits of the ecclesiastical province of Lithuania were to coincide with the existing frontiers; bishops were to be nominated by the Holy See, subject to the approval of the President of the Republic; although religious education was compulsory in all State schools, Catholic Churches might have their own schools, supported by the State.

In the autumn of 1930 there was a recrudescence of hostility when the Government suppressed the Catholic Youth Organization, on the ground that the Church was encouraging political propaganda against the Government, and arrested a number of Christian-Democratic leaders. An exchange of Notes between the Vatican and the Government, followed by a visit of the Papal-Legate, Mgr. Bartolini, to Rome in January 1931, failed to lead to a reconciliation, and in June Mgr. Bartolini was virtually turned out of the country. Relations improved somewhat after the appointment of Mgr. Faidutti as Papal Chargé d'Affaires in August; but up till now no general measure of agreement has been reached, and the Government has succeeded in getting the upper hand in its struggle with the Christian-Democratic party, which was suppressed in 1935. The new Constitution adopted in February 1938, which provides for the introduction of civil marriage and deprives the Church of its autonomy, has aroused considerable opposition in clerical circles.

4. Education[1]

Under the Russian régime primary education in the Estonian and Latvian Provinces reached a fairly high level; in 1886, 98 per cent.

[1] For statistics relating to the number and types of schools in the three countries, see footnotes on pp. 31, 34, and 38 above.

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1938 RB1 Baltic States RB1
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642 of diplomatic relations, led to the resignation of the Tubelis Government. But the Cabinet formed on March 24, with Father Mironas as Prime Minister, included both M. Tubelis himself and M. Lozoraitis, who retained the portfolio of Foreign Affairs; while any hope of a broadening of the base of representation was disappointed by the exclusion of the Opposition from the new Government.

V. FOREIGN RELATIONS[1]

Introduction

131 The emergence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as independent States required the fall of two great empires, the Russian and the German. To-day their international significance lies in the fact that, together with Poland, they form a buffer between two first-class modern Powers, the Third German Reich and the Soviet Union, and this not merely in a strategic but also in an ideological and an economic sense: strategic, since in the event of either Great Power attacking the other, the role of Belgium in the Great War might well be thrust upon the Baltic States,[2] and their territory be converted into a theatre of war; ideological, because they constitute a narrow wedge between Communist and National-Socialist totalitarian States, to whose rival propagandas they are dangerously exposed; and finally economic, since, on the one hand, the whole area consists of thinly populated agricultural country which is regarded by Germany as being peculiarly suited to extensive German colonization, while, on the other hand, it is a corridor for Russian trade with Western Europe and a seaboard which the Soviet Union might at some time consider it desirable to repossess. Moreover, if either Russia or Germany were to take possession of these countries, the Baltic Sea would be in danger of becoming little more than a private lake.

●648 829 This antithesis between Germany and Russia did not, however, become apparent in any marked degree until comparatively recently. For the first decade of their history the new Baltic States regarded the Soviet Union as the common menace; Germany was a defeated and disarmed enemy, and it was not until the rise to power of the Nazi movement in 1933 that they began to entertain fears of danger from that quarter.

The problem of how to secure some measures of security *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union confronted all the north-eastern Succession States,

[1] For a detailed record of the Baltic in international affairs, see relevant sections of the *Survey of International Affairs* for 1920–3, 1924, 1925 (vol. ii), 1927, 1932, 1934, 1935 (vol. i), and 1936, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and published by the Oxford University Press.

[2] Although, since the loss of Vilna, Lithuania has no longer a common frontier with the U.S.S.R.

648 829 including Finland and Poland; but the policy which they adopted in dealing with it varied according to their respective geographical positions and their different political and economic connexions with pre-War Russia, as well as to their special affinities with, or revulsions from, other Powers or one another.

131 504 648 Estonia and Latvia had most to fear from the U.S.S.R. and most to gain from a close Baltic Union, partly on account of their common frontiers with the U.S.S.R., which exposed them to the infiltration of Communism to a dangerous extent, but chiefly because their territory had formerly contained the main outlets of Russian trade with the West. The old Russian ports of Riga, Windau (Ventspils), and Libau (Liepāja) were now Latvian, while Reval (Tallinn), Pernau (Pärnu), and Baltic Port (Paldiski) had fallen to Estonia. Of these, Libau and Baltic Port had been Tsarist Russia's principal naval bases, while Riga had been her third largest Western port, ranking after St. Petersburg and Odessa. All of them were linked up by railways with Great Russia.[1] The serious economic consequences for the new Republics, even more than for the U.S.S.R., of their political separation from their natural hinterland, are described elsewhere.[2]

648 Lithuania, who (after 1920) had no common frontier with the U.S.S.R., had less cause for anxiety in that direction, and was, therefore, relatively indifferent to the advantages of a Baltic Union. In any case successive Governments were preoccupied by prolonged disputes with Poland over Vilna, and later with Germany over Memel.[3] The Vilna dispute, in particular, prevented her for a long time from participating in any form of Baltic *bloc*, since the other interested Powers refused to sign any pact which might involve them in a conflict with Poland, while Lithuania herself refused to sign one from which that possibility had been eliminated.[4]

Finland[5] also, owing to her geographical position, was spared extreme fear of the Soviet Union, since even if the latter were to become involved in a war with Poland or Germany, Finnish territory and neutrality would not necessarily be violated. Moreover, a large proportion of the population, and particularly of the aristocracy, was Swedish, and there was a thriving Swedish political party; in consequence Finland showed a strong tendency to orientate towards the Scandinavian rather than towards the Baltic States, and a marked

[1] See map.

[2] See below, pp. 192–4.

[3] These disputes are treated in detail in Section VI, p. 89.

[439] [4] Latvia's attitude towards the Vilna dispute was complicated by the fact that the trunk railway connecting the port of Liepāja with Romny, in Russia, passed through Lithuanian territory before entering Poland, so that her trade with that country, as well as with Russia, was affected by the closing of the Lithuanian-Polish frontier.

[5] Finland's foreign policy is dealt with in more detail in the handbook in this series dealing with the Scandinavian States.

● 648 reluctance to become involved in any disputes between Poland and Lithuania or the U.S.S.R.

Poland herself, although a far larger and more powerful State than her Baltic neighbours, felt her security to be even more precarious than theirs. Not only was she acutely afraid of the U.S.S.R., but the acquisition of Danzig and the 'Polish Corridor' had apparently earned the permanent hostility of Germany, while the occupation of Vilna had led, until 1938, to a state of affairs bordering on undeclared war with Lithuania. For these reasons Poland was one of the chief agents in various schemes for a Greater Baltic Union, formulated between 1919 and 1925.

As to the U.S.S.R., the policy pursued towards the Baltic States was somewhat ambiguous. With each of them a generous peace was [666] concluded, conceding full recognition of their independence. On the other hand, it was hoped, by organizing Communist movements within their frontiers, to secure their ultimate adhesion to the Russian Federation of Autonomous Republics. With this end in view everything was done at first to prevent the formation of a Baltic alliance under Polish leadership, on the principle of *divide et impera*; at the same time MM. Chicherin and Litvinov endeavoured, with ultimate success, to negotiate a network of separate non-aggression pacts with each individual State. After 1933 there was a shift of emphasis from fear of the U.S.S.R. to fear of Germany; the more powerful the latter became, the less imminent seemed the danger from the former, particularly after the Soviet entry into the League of Nations in September 1934, and the adoption of a foreign policy to harmonize with this development.

Thus the diplomatic history of North-Eastern Europe may be divided into three phases, which, being conditioned chiefly by changes in the balance of power in the wider European sphere, are more or less clearly marked, although there is a certain amount of chronological overlapping. In the first phase, lasting from 1918 to about 1925, the Baltic States were preoccupied in varying degrees with the construction of some form of defensive military alliance. In the second phase, from about 1925 to 1933, the Soviet Union redoubled the efforts which it had already made during the first phase to render its own position more secure by non-aggression and trade agreements; during this period the idea of a Greater Baltic *bloc* was discarded in favour of a much closer Little Baltic Union. In the third phase, lasting from the end of 1933 up to the present day, the resurgence of Germany led on the one hand to an unsuccessful attempt on the part of France and the U.S.S.R. to negotiate an Eastern Pact, and on the other hand to the final consolidation of the alliance between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in September 1934.

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1. The Peace Treaties with Soviet Russia

Taken at their face value, the treaties of peace which Soviet Russia negotiated with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania[1] in 1920 were models of restraint and even of generosity. The new Republics obtained *de jure* recognition in identic clauses declaring that 'on the basis of the right of all peoples freely to decide their own destinies, and even to separate themselves completely from the state of which they form a part', Soviet Russia unreservedly recognized their independence and autonomy, and voluntarily and for ever renounced all rights of sovereignty formerly held over their peoples and territories. The new frontiers were defined, and joint commissions set up to carry out their demarcation; in the case of Estonia, neutral zones were established on either side, to be maintained until January 1, 1922, and both parties undertook not to keep armed vessels on the frontier lakes of Peipus and Pskov. In the case of Lithuania, it was stipulated that the Lithuanian-Polish and Lithuanian-Latvian frontiers should be fixed by arrangement with those States.[2]

Provision was made in all three treaties for the exercise, on both sides of the frontier, of the right of option within a limited period of time in the matter of nationality, and also for the amnesty and repatriation of prisoners. In the Latvian and Estonian treaties special arrangements were made for the liquidation of the existing military situation by Joint Commissioners, and for the mutual surrender of all claims on account of war losses or expenses. In every case, Soviet Russia surrendered any claims to the transfer of property, or the compensatory value thereof, and renounced all rights held by the State over real and personal property. Moreover, the Soviet Government undertook to restore, in so far as was possible, the various objects of value—ranging from archives and title-deeds to rolling stock and church bells—which had been evacuated to Russia during the World War. In addition to this reparation in kind, Estonia was to receive 15 million gold roubles, Lithuania 3 million, and Latvia 4 million.

Diplomatic and consular relations were to be established and commercial treaties negotiated, in the case of Lithuania on a most-favoured-nation basis. The Latvian and Estonian treaties, however, contained stipulations that neither party could claim to enjoy privileges granted to a third State by virtue of a Customs or other union. One of the most important provisions related to the unification of transit rates and reciprocal exemption from transit taxes, with the

[1] For the texts of these Treaties: Tartu (February 2, 1920), Riga (August 11, 1920), and Moscow (July 12, 1920), see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vols. xi, p. 30; iii, p. 106; and ii, p. 196.

[2] But see p. 90 for subsequent changes in the Soviet–Lithuanian frontier.

● 648 additional stipulation in Estonia's case that Soviet Russia should be given free docks and warehouse sites in Estonian ports.[1]
728 An interesting feature of the Estonian and Lithuanian treaties is the article providing that 'should the perpetual neutrality of Estonia (*or Lithuania*) be internationally recognized, Russia undertakes to respect such neutrality and to join in guaranteeing it'. Moreover, Estonia and Soviet Russia also agreed to accede to the conditions of any international agreement which might in future be reached for the neutralization of the Gulf of Finland.[2]

The Latvian treaty contained an undertaking on the part of each party not to permit the residence in its territory of representatives or officials of groups having as their object the overthrow of the Government of the other party. This might be taken to refer either to the prohibition of White Russian activities in Latvia,[3] or to Communist propaganda against the Latvian Government directed from Moscow.

2. Early Post-War Diplomacy

648 *Break-down of the First Schemes for a Greater Baltic Union, 1919–22.* As early as the Peace Conference in Paris in 1918–19, a project for a Baltic League had been drawn up and presented by the Estonian delegation, providing for a political and economic union of three separate groups of nations: the first consisting of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; the second of Finland, Estonia, and Latvia; and the third of Lithuania and Poland. The object of this league was to safeguard the freedom of the Baltic Sea and to establish a common system of defence. In August 1919 an agreement was drafted for a union of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and in the following September these three States, together with Finland, met to consider negotiating a common peace with Soviet Russia, who, however, refused to contemplate joint discussions. At the first Baltic Conference proper, held at Helsinki (Helsingfors) in January 1920, and attended by Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, the co-ordination of foreign policy and the organization of a general military defensive union were discussed, as well as the question of the neutralization of the Baltic Sea. At a second conference held in August 1920, at Bulduri (near Riga), it was decided to adopt a draft arbitration convention and to set up a permanent 'Council of Plenipotentiaries'. The Convention was never ratified, however, nor the

[1] See Appendix II.
[2] No such international agreement has so far been concluded; although in 1925–6 the Finnish and Estonian Governments negotiated agreements with the U.S.S.R. relating to the control over the Gulf and assuring free passage of Soviet vessels to Soviet ports, Estonia declined to neutralize the islands of Saaremaa (Oesel) and Hiiumaa (Dagö).
[3] Similar safeguards against this danger were incorporated in the Lithuanian and Estonian treaties.

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Council ever called into being, while the project of defensive alliance fell to the ground through Finland's refusal to adhere to it on account of the Vilna dispute. For the same reason this was the last conference attended by Lithuania for a long time to come. 648

Thus, nothing had so far been achieved; moreover, a project formed in 1920 for an alliance of the Succession States from the Baltic to the Black Sea had dwindled into a Polish-Rumanian pact, while attempts to induce the Scandinavian States to join with Finland, Poland, and the Baltic States in forming a *bloc* had also been unsuccessful. The Finnish Foreign Minister, M. Holsti, now made a determined attempt to secure a military alliance with Estonia, Latvia, and Poland. A conference at Helsinki in July 1921 resulted in the signature of a protocol on July 24, providing for the holding of periodic conferences of the Foreign Ministers of the four countries, as well as in the conclusion of a commercial treaty between Estonia and Finland; but at a second conference of the same Powers, on March 13–17, 1922, this time at Warsaw, the Holsti scheme broke down completely. A Convention[1] was concluded by which the four Powers reciprocally confirmed their respective peace treaties and pledged themselves to communicate to one another the texts of any treaties which might in the future be concluded with other States. Moreover, provision was made for the arbitration of future disputes,[2] for the observance of a benevolent neutrality towards any signatory State which might be attacked without provocation, and for immediate consultation with regard to the steps to be taken in such circumstances (Article 7). This Convention never came into force, however, as Finland refused to ratify it on the ground that Article 7 might involve her in a Soviet-Polish war. M. Holsti was obliged to resign his office, and the hope of a four-Power military alliance was brought to an end for a time. Fortunately, the admission of the Baltic States into the League of Nations in 1921[3] had to some extent lessened the general sense of insecurity, and in July of that year a preliminary political and military agreement was concluded between Estonia and Latvia.

Abortive Negotiations for a Soviet-Baltic Disarmament Pact in 1922. About the time of the Warsaw Conference, the Soviet Government put forward proposals for disarmament and the establishment of demilitarized frontier zones. On the initiative of M. Meierovics, the Latvian Foreign Minister, the U.S.S.R. and the Warsaw Powers were invited to send representatives to a conference at Riga, where on

[1] For text, see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. xi, p. 168.

[2] For text of Arbitration and Conciliation Agreement, see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. xxxviii, p. 358.

[3] The Baltic States were represented on the League Council by Finland from October 1927–30, and by Latvia from October 1936 for a period of three years.

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1938 RB1 Baltic States RB1

● 648 March 30, 1922, a protocol[1] was signed reaffirming the sanctity of the treaties, agreeing to the establishment of neutral zones, and advocating the renewal of trade relations with the Soviet Union. But, owing to objections raised by some of the Powers concerned, and by Finland in particular, it never came into force. In the following April the Baltic States were represented at the Genoa Conference, whose chief object was the establishment of normal relations between Europe and the Soviet Union, but which failed to produce any tangible results beyond the unintended one of a German-Soviet treaty signed at Rapallo on April 16, 1922, and an ephemeral pact of non-aggression which lasted only two months, until the break-up of the Hague Conference.

Finally, in June 1922, a more determined attempt to secure the desired agreement was made by M. Litvinov, who sent identic Notes inviting Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Finland to attend a conference on the question in Moscow. Lithuania was not invited until November, and then without the knowledge of Poland; Rumania was also invited, but declined owing to the Soviet refusal to recognize the Bessarabian frontier. After preliminary consultations of the Warsaw Powers at Tallinn in August and October, the conference assembled in December. While the Soviet delegation was anxious to discuss disarmament first and a non-aggression pact afterwards, Poland and the Baltic States insisted on reversing this order. A pact was first drawn up,[2] therefore, by which the five signatories undertook to refrain from any act of aggression against one another, or from supporting any non-signatory State committing such an act against one of their number, and agreed to decide all disputes among themselves by peaceful means. A special agreement was to be drawn up providing that disputes arising on subjects not regulated by the Peace Treaties, or out of the existing territorial position, should be referred to arbitration. Unfortunately, the signature of the non-aggression pact was to be linked with that of a disarmament agreement; and when the latter came to be discussed, a deadlock arose over the question of 'moral' disarmament, and, since the Soviet Union declined to make any pledge that Communist propaganda in the Succession States should cease, the conference broke up without achieving any results.

Poland and the Baltic Bloc. Apart from the periodic conferences provided for by the protocol signed in 1921 by Finland, Poland, Estonia, and Latvia, the next important meeting of these four Powers took place at Riga in July 1923, when proposals were considered for the reduction of naval armaments on the east coast of the Baltic Sea, and it was agreed to support proposals for armaments reduction and a general treaty of guarantee at the next League Assembly. At the

[1] For text, see *Soviet Red Book*, 1923, pp. 239–41. [2] Ibid., pp. 152–3.

Seventh Baltic Conference at Warsaw in February 1924, however, a proposal for joint action at the next Assembly was opposed by Poland, while a proposed treaty of arbitration was abandoned owing to Finnish opposition. 648

In the meantime progress was made towards the closer union of the three Baltic States proper, or at least of Estonia and Latvia. The preliminary agreement of 1921 between these two countries was now consolidated by a ten-year Treaty of Defensive Alliance,[1] signed on November 1, 1923, which provided that the two countries should concert together and give mutual political and diplomatic support in their international relations, that if either party were attacked on its existing frontiers without provocation the other should immediately come to its assistance, and that all disputes between them should be referred either to the Permanent Court of International Justice or to some other form of arbitration. Each party also undertook not to enter into an alliance with a third party without the other's consent. At the same time, a preliminary treaty establishing an economic and Customs union was signed, containing a clause whereby each party enjoyed all the rights and privileges which had been or might in future be granted to other nations, and providing among other things for the establishment of a mixed commission which should complete the work of co-ordinating tariffs and tariff legislation within a period of three months.[2] 439 648

At the beginning of 1925 it seemed as if Poland's policy of uniting the north-eastern States under her leadership might be successful. At a conference of the four States at Helsinki in January, with Lithuania as an observer, the three smaller Powers, with the impression left by a serious Communist rising in Estonia in the previous December still fresh in their minds, proved more than usually sensible of the Russian danger, and therefore more disposed to conciliate Poland. A general Convention[3] was concluded, and subsequently ratified on September 7, 1925, by which the signatories undertook to submit to conciliation or arbitration any disputes arising between them which could not be solved by diplomatic procedure, with the exception of those relating to the territorial status of the contracting parties, as well as of disputes 'the legal nature of which makes them 648

[1] *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. xxiii, p. 82. The Treaty was ratified on February 21, 1924. At the end of the ten-year term either party might denounce it on giving one year's notice; as neither has done so, the Treaty is still in force.

[2] This preliminary agreement was replaced by a definitive treaty on February 5, 1927, which appointed a mixed commission not only to draft a joint Customs tariff and co-ordinate the existing tariff legislation, but also to unify the laws relating to taxation, trade marks, labour legislation and so forth, to co-ordinate the policy of the central banks, and to unify trade treaties with other countries; for text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. lxii, p. 319. In actual fact, however, these treaties have never been implemented.

[3] For text see League of Nations Document, C. 34. 1926 (*Arbitration and Security*), p. 121.

● 648 subject solely to the domestic legislation of the party concerned'. A Permanent Conciliation Commission was to be established under a neutral chairman, but any dispute might by agreement be submitted direct to the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague.

Actually, however, the Helsinki Convention represented the high-water-mark of Polish efforts to create a larger Baltic Union. With the slackening of Soviet Communist propaganda during 1925, and the improvement of relations with Germany in the summer,[1] the desire for such protection as Poland could afford became less acute. The periodic conference of the four Powers in August 1925 was largely formal, and, although measures were discussed for accelerating the entry into force of the Helsinki Convention, the arrangements for holding the next conference were left indefinite. On the other hand, the prospects of the Little Baltic Union seemed to be growing brighter. In May 1924 a conference convened on the initiative of Lithuania had met at Kaunas to consider the possibility of extending the Estonian-Latvian Customs Union to Lithuania, and it had been decided to appoint committees of experts to work out a scheme which should then be put into effect by a further conference. The three Powers also appear to have agreed upon a concerted foreign policy wherever possible, and in particular at the League Assembly. In July 1925, and again in 1926, conferences between Latvia and Lithuania were held at Kaunas with a view to negotiating an economic treaty on the lines of the Latvian-Estonian trade treaty, as well as an arbitration treaty. The practical results of all three conferences were negligible; the fact that they were held was, however, symptomatic of the gradual abandonment of the idea of a Greater Baltic Union for that of a purely Baltic *bloc*—a change of policy which caused alarm and suspicion in Poland. In August 1925 the Latvian Foreign Minister declared openly that the question of the formation of a four-Power union of Finland, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland was no longer urgent, and predicted that sooner or later a close alliance between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was bound to materialize.

3. Relations with the Soviet Union, 1925–33

Negotiations for Bilateral Pacts of Non-Aggression, 1925–7. During the years 1923–4 Soviet foreign policy was preoccupied with affairs of wider scope, and it was not until 1925, after the lapse of the Geneva Protocol, that tentative negotiations for non-aggression pacts with

[1] Germany concluded arbitration conventions with Finland and Estonia in March and August 1925, respectively. In the early post-War period various treaties were concluded between Germany and the Baltic States; Estonia signed a provisional commercial agreement in June 1923 and an arbitration convention in August 1925; Latvia concluded a provisional agreement for the resumption of relations in July 1920, and commercial agreements in September 1921 and May 1922; Lithuania signed an agreement for the settlement of outstanding questions in May 1923, and commercial and frontier traffic agreements in June 1924.

Poland and the Baltic States were begun. The Polish Government, 648 ●
suspecting an attempt to break up the Warsaw front by the initiation of separate negotiations, replied to the Soviet Government's overtures in the summer that she could consider nó offer which was not made to all the Baltic States alike, and made Polish co-operation conditional on the convening of a conference which should include Finland also. A Soviet invitation to the Baltic States themselves, to negotiate an agreement based on an undertaking that they would remain neutral in the event of a war between the Soviet Union and a third Power, and on the submission of disputes to arbitration, received no reply. An interesting light is thrown on Soviet Baltic policy at this time by a statement of M. Chicherin, during an official visit to Kaunas, to the effect that while his Government had no objection to a pacific, economic, and political union between the Baltic States, it disapproved of the Polish conception of a Baltic Union acting, under Polish leadership, as a barrier 'in defence of European civilization against the Asiatic Barbarians'.[1]

On March 5, 1926, the Soviet Government made fresh overtures with a view to concluding pacts of non-aggression with Finland and the three Baltic States. While still refusing to include Poland in a collective agreement,[2] M. Litvinov appeared for the moment to have waived his insistence on separate negotiations with each of the other States, and his chances of success were rendered the more favourable by the conclusion, on April 25, 1926, of a Treaty of Neutrality and Non-aggression with Germany, which relieved the small border States of considerable anxiety. Moreover, in the case of Lithuania, the Soviet Government was able to exploit the hostility towards Poland caused by the Vilna controversy, which was becoming increasingly bitter, especially after the Polish Concordat with the Vatican whereby Vilna was recognized as a Polish diocese.

Separate negotiations begun between the U.S.S.R. and Lithuania in the spring terminated in the signature of a treaty at Moscow on September 28, 1926,[3] modelled on the non-aggression pacts already

[1] *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 30, 1925.

[2] In a statement in *Izvestia* of April 27, 1926, M. Litvinov, Acting Commissar for Foreign Affairs, explained:

'We are proposing a treaty of guarantee to the Baltic States whether separately, collectively, or with a group among them. . . . Unfortunately all our efforts to arrive at a full understanding with Poland have always been obstructed by the attempt of the Poles to try to manage the foreign relations of all the Baltic States . . . she (Poland) insists on speaking in the name of all the Baltic States which, so far as we know, have not entrusted her with this power.'

Later in the year, however, the Soviet Government embarked on separate negotiations for a non-aggression pact with Poland, and by September 1927 some measure of agreement appears to have been reached on certain points.

[3] This treaty was renewed on May 6, 1931, for a period of five years, and was again prolonged until December 31, 1945, by a Protocol signed on April 4, 1934; for text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. lv, p. 145.

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● 648 concluded by the U.S.S.R. with Germany and Turkey. Its first Article stated that the relations between the two countries would continue to be based on the Treaty of Moscow signed in 1920. The implied recognition of Lithuania's claim to Vilna was reinforced by an accompanying Note from M. Chicherin stating that the '*de facto* violation' of Lithuania's frontiers had not shaken the Soviet's attitude towards the territorial sovereignty defined in the Treaty of Moscow. The second and third Articles of the Treaty bound each party to respect the other's territorial integrity, and to adopt a neutral attitude towards any third Power attacking it.[1] Finally, the signatories undertook, in the event of disputes arising between them which could not be settled by diplomatic procedure, to appoint conciliation commissions in accordance with an agreement to be concluded separately. Negotiations for a commercial treaty were also begun, but were broken off in December 1926 as a result of the Nationalist *coup d'état* in Kaunas.

The separate negotiations leading up to this Soviet-Lithuanian Treaty had aroused considerable uneasiness in Estonia and Latvia, as well as in Poland. In July the Latvian Foreign Minister, M. Ulmanis, visited Kaunas in an unsuccessful attempt to draw Lithuania back into the common Baltic front, and to negotiate treaties of trade and arbitration, while the Polish Government made overtures for the resumption of diplomatic relations. The actual conclusion of the Treaty, and in particular the clause implying the recognition by the U.S.S.R. of the Lithuanian claim to Vilna, led to the dispatch, on October 28, 1926, of a Polish Note of protest to the Soviet Government, which, however, received but a vague and inconclusive reply.

Meanwhile Soviet negotiations with Estonia and Latvia jointly, and separately with Finland, had been proceeding less smoothly. The Soviet Note of March 5, 1926, had proposed a mutual guarantee of existing frontiers, a mutual pact of non-aggression and neutrality, and an undertaking not to join a coalition against any of the parties. In their reply, dispatched on April 28, 1926, in the form of identic Notes, Estonia and Latvia put forward the following counter-proposals: the treaty of guarantee should include an undertaking to avoid anything calculated to disturb friendly relations between the parties; a State which commenced war against another contracting party, or a State which committed an aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of another party, with or

[1] A supplementary Note from the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, however, stipulated that this pledge should not interfere with the fulfilment of Lithuania's obligations under the League Covenant, while at the same time observing that the Lithuanian Government did not, in view of Lithuania's geographical position, consider that such obligations could constitute an obstacle to her aspirations to neutrality.

without a declaration of war, should be recognized as an aggressor; 648 ● nothing in the proposed convention should conflict with the League Covenant, or with the Estonian-Latvian Alliance; all disputes without exception should be settled by arbitration or conciliation; the contracting parties should undertake not to allow propaganda of any kind against another party on that party's territory; the signatories should retain the right to conclude treaties with other States, provided that they were not directed against a contracting party; in the event of one party attacking another in violation of the convention, all the signatories should recover their freedom of action; and finally, the proposed convention should be open to the adherence of any other government, with the consent of all the signatory States. The Finnish Government replied to the Soviet Note on May 5, in almost identical terms.

The Soviet Government then submitted a draft treaty to Estonia and Latvia, and initiated verbal discussions with Finland, to whom it finally presented a further Note on July 12. After a conference of the Foreign Ministers of Finland, Estonia, and Latvia at Tallinn on July 13–14, identic Notes were dispatched on the 24th, proposing the creation of a joint commission to work along the lines suggested in their previous Notes. The U.S.S.R., however, rejected this proposal, and a new phase of separate negotiations was inaugurated by the dispatch of identic Notes from the three Baltic States on August 24, expressing their readiness to negotiate individually with the Soviet Union, while reserving the right to keep in close touch with one another in the matter.

Conversations between Finland and the U.S.S.R. broke down, however, in November, as the latter refused to agree to the appointment of a neutral chairman in the proposed commission of conciliation, rejected absolutely the principle of arbitration, and insisted on the insertion of a clause empowering either party to cancel the treaty in the event of the other party concluding an agreement with a third Power.

Discussions with Estonia and Latvia also reached a deadlock for similar reasons. In March 1927, however, the Soviet Government showed signs of making certain concessions; while maintaining its objection to the principle of arbitration, it now agreed to the appointment of a neutral chairman on the conciliation commission, and to the publication, simultaneously with the treaties, of unilateral statements by Estonia and Latvia on the question of their obligations under the League Covenant. Negotiations with these two countries now took independent courses; those with Estonia were eventually suspended, but in Latvia the Social-Democratic Government of M. Skujenieks was anxious, mainly for economic reasons, to come to an

● 648 understanding with the U.S.S.R. and consented to initial a Pact of Non-aggression on March 9, 1927; in doing so, however, actual signature was made dependent on the simultaneous signature of a convention of conciliation providing for a neutral chairman, as well as on Soviet assent to a unilateral declaration of Latvia's fidelity to her [439] obligations under the League Covenant. In the following June Latvia concluded a five-year commercial treaty[1] with the U.S.S.R. which aroused strong criticism in Estonia—already resentful at Latvia's independent action in the matter of the non-aggression pact—on the ground that it rendered unworkable the Estonian-Latvian Customs Union. The trade agreement was also criticized by the Latvian industrialists, who complained that it granted privileges to the Soviet commercial organizations in Latvia which were not accorded to Latvian citizens in the Soviet Union, and pointed out that the diplomatic immunity conceded to the members and premises of the Soviet Trade Agency had already been grossly abused in other countries.

Thus, the efforts of the Soviet Government during the years 1925–7 were rewarded by a fair measure of success in so far as Lithuania and Latvia were concerned, although the Soviet-Latvian Non-aggression Pact was not actually signed. Moreover, the U.S.S.R. had concluded agreements with Latvia on July 19, 1926, and with Estonia on August 8, 1927, laying down the procedure for the settlement of frontier disputes. In reality, however, the situation at the end of this period had not changed to any great degree, and it was not until early in 1932 that Finland, Estonia, and Latvia felt sufficiently confident of Soviet good faith to conclude the much-desired treaties of non-aggression.

The Litvinov Protocol, 1928–9. In the meantime the Soviet Government directed its energies towards persuading the various States on its western borders to anticipate regionally the general application of the Pact of Paris for the Renunciation of War, which had been signed on August 27, 1928 by fifteen States, including the U.S.S.R., but which was not to come into force until after the deposition of ratification by all the signatories. In a Note to the Polish Government on December 29, 1928, M. Litvinov enclosed a draft protocol providing that the General Treaty should come into force, as between the two countries, immediately after its ratification by their respective legislative bodies, and that it should be open to adherence by any other State. A similar Note was addressed to the Lithuanian Government, which accepted the proposal and communicated it to

[1] For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. lxviii, p. 321. A new commercial treaty was concluded between Latvia and the U.S.S.R. on December 4, 1933; for text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. clviii, p. 114.

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the Governments of Estonia and Latvia with the rec mmendation 648 ● that they also should do so. The Polish Government's reaction was more cautious. Suspecting, in the Soviet Government's method of individual approach, some attempt to isolate the border States from one another, and being unwilling to conclude any agreement from which their ally, Rumania, was excluded, they at once informed the latter of the Soviet suggestion, and replied on January 10, 1929, that they accepted M. Litvinov's proposal in principle, subject to previous consultation with their co-signatories of the Pact of Paris, and with the other border States.

After further exchanges of Notes relating chiefly to the inclusion of Rumania,[1] to which M. Litvinov agreed on January 12, Soviet-Polish discussions as to procedure were begun in Moscow, and it was decided that five of the States concerned—Poland, Rumania, Latvia, Estonia, and the U.S.S.R.—should sign the Protocol simultaneously on February 7. Finland had taken no part in the negotiations, apparently considering herself, now, as a member of the Scandinavian, rather than of the Baltic, group of States; Lithuania had arranged to sign later, in order to avoid any appearance of amity with Poland. Signature of the Protocol was postponed at the last moment, however, in order that those States which had not yet ratified the Pact itself should first submit that treaty to their respective legislative bodies. The General Treaty was approved by the Polish Diet on February 7, and ratified by Estonia on February 8; on the 9th the Protocol was signed at Moscow,[2] although the Latvian Foreign Minister's signature was provisional pending Latvia's formal ratification of the General Treaty on February 12. Finally, ratifications of the Protocol were deposited at Moscow by the U.S.S.R. and Latvia on March 5, by Estonia on the 15th, and by Poland and Rumania on the 30th. Lithuania's signature followed on April 1. Invitations to Turkey, Persia, and the Free City of Danzig to adhere to the Protocol were subsequently proffered and accepted. The negotiations just described were remarkable in three respects: in the first place, they revealed a new readiness on the part of the Soviet Union to deal collectively instead of individually with the border States; secondly, they foreshadowed more conciliatory relations between Rumania and the U.S.S.R., in spite of continued friction over the Bessarabian frontier; and finally, they culminated in an agreement to which, for the first time, both Lithuania and Poland consented to subscribe.

[1] The principal difficulty here arose out of the Soviet's refusal to recognize the Rumanian annexation of Bessarabia in 1920, the consequences of which were that the frontier remained closed and diplomatic relations were not resumed.

[2] For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. lxxix, p. 369.

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● 648 *Conclusion of Non-Aggression Pacts by Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, 1932.* Early in 1932 the Treaties of Non-aggression with Finland, Latvia, and Estonia for which the Soviet Government had worked so long, were at last concluded. The Soviet-Finnish Treaty came first, on January 21; Latvia followed with a three-year Non-aggression Pact signed at Riga on February 5,[1] and a supplementary Convention of Conciliation on June 18.[2] Finally, two similar agreements for non-aggression and conciliation were concluded in Moscow between Estonia and the U.S.S.R. on May 4 and June 16 respectively.[3]

The Latvian and Estonian Treaties, the terms of which were practically identical, represented a compromise with the Soviet Government's principles. Each contained a clause to the effect that the obligations under the present Treaty should not affect the international obligations devolving on the contracting parties from treaties concluded or obligations assumed prior to the entry into force of the present Treaty, in so far as the latter contained no 'elements of aggression within the meaning of the present Treaty'. On the other hand, the Baltic States gave way over the question of the appointment of a neutral chairman on the Conciliation Commissions provided for by the supplementary Conventions of Conciliation. Both the Estonian and Latvian treaties, as well as the Soviet-Lithuanian Non-aggression Pact of 1926, were renewed until December 31, 1945, by Protocols signed in Moscow on April 4, 1934, while the Soviet-Finnish Treaty was also renewed for the same period on April 7 of that year.

4. The Resurgence of Germany

By the beginning of 1933 great changes in the pattern of world politics had become apparent, changes the implications of which were as profoundly felt in the restricted sphere of Baltic affairs as in any other part of Europe. The Nazi party's accession to power on January 30, 1933, coupled with the doctrine of German eastward expansion set forth by Herr Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, and openly preached by his adviser on foreign affairs, Herr Rosenberg (himself of German-Baltic stock), was sufficient cause for uneasiness on the part of Baltic statesmen, particularly in view of the existence of considerable German minorities, the protection of whose interests might serve as a pretext for German interference in the domestic affairs of their countries. For the U.S.S.R. there were menaces on two fronts. The official co-operation which had continued between the Soviet and German armies ever since the Rapallo Treaty of 1922 was now broken off, and the policy of *rapprochement* suffered a complete reversal;

[1] For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. cxlviii, p. 113.
[2] Ibid., p. 130.
[3] Ibid., vol. cxxxi, pp. 298 and 310.

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moreover, Nazi Germany was known to have aspirations in the Ukraine. Japan, on the eastern flank, was developing an increasingly militarist spirit, and already in 1932 had established sovereignty over Manchuria, and virtual control over the Chinese Eastern Railway. The worst fear was that these two enemies might sometime unite in a simultaneous attack on Soviet territory. 648 ●

The effect of these developments on the Baltic States, it has already been noted, was twofold. On the one hand, M. Litvinov redoubled his efforts to secure the western frontier by means of pacts of non-aggression or mutual assistance—quite abandoning his earlier aversion to the principle of collective action; while, on the other hand, there was a marked tendency on the part of the 'Little Baltic' States to draw closer together. In recent times there has been a noticeable hesitation, among the border Powers, between the policy of defensive alliance with the U.S.S.R. inaugurated by Czechoslovakia, on the one hand, and that of conciliation with Germany adopted by Poland, on the other.

The Convention defining Aggression, 1933. In the course of discussion in the Disarmament Conference on the definition of aggression, the Soviet delegate put forward a proposal on February 6, 1933, which formed the basis of the Draft Convention adopted by the Politis Committee at Geneva on May 24. Shortly afterwards a series of articles by M. Radek appeared in *Izvestia*, attacking the discussion of treaty revision as 'the smoke screen behind which Imperialism prepares the most terrible and ruthless war that the human brain can conceive'. The change of direction of Soviet foreign policy implicit in this semi-official declaration was admirably calculated to reassure any States which might still entertain the suspicion that the U.S.S.R. harboured aggressive designs on their territorial integrity.

During the World Economic Conference in London in the following June M. Litvinov approached the signatories of the Litvinov Protocol of 1929 with a view to securing their anticipatory adhesion, as between themselves, to the Geneva Draft Convention defining aggression, without waiting for a general disarmament convention. His proposals were accepted by all but Finland and Lithuania, and a Convention[1] was signed on July 3 by eight States, including Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and the U.S.S.R. An appendix to the Convention enumerated certain circumstances which should not be considered as justifying any of the acts of aggression defined therein, including 'the internal position of any State, as, for example: its political, economic or social structure; alleged shortcomings of its administration; disorder following upon strikes, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary movements, and war'. It would appear from this

[1] For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. cxlvii, p. 67.

● 648 stipulation that the Soviet Government had at last admitted the propriety of putting some curb on the activities of the Third International, although subsequent experience can hardly be said to have justified such an assumption.

On July 5 Lithuania concluded with the U.S.S.R. a separate bilateral agreement identical in terms with the multilateral convention of July 3, thus avoiding any direct agreement with Poland; finally, on July 23, Finland adhered to a Five-Power Convention couched in similar terms and signed by the members of the Little Entente, Turkey, and the U.S.S.R. on July 4.

Negotiations for an Eastern Locarno, 1934–5. With the conclusion in 1932 of pacts of non-aggression between the U.S.S.R., on the one hand, and Poland and her ally, France, on the other, Polish aspirations to create an anti-Soviet Baltic *bloc* had died a natural death. On January 5, 1934, it was learnt that the Governments of Poland and the U.S.S.R. had approached the Baltic States with a suggestion for a joint Soviet-Polish guarantee of their security. The Finnish Government, however, had apparently quashed the idea on the ground that the existing non-aggression treaties rendered such a guarantee unnecessary. The Baltic States were, in fact, in a somewhat delicate position, for, while they would have wished to secure some form of international guarantee against German aggression, at the same time they feared that a treaty in which Germany herself was not invited to participate would merely excite her resentment and increase the danger of war instead of diminishing it. A few weeks later an entirely new element in the situation was introduced by the signature on January 26, 1934, of a German-Polish Non-aggression Declaration in which the contracting parties pledged themselves, for the next ten years, not to resort to force as a means of settling their differences with one another.

M. Litvinov's next step was to suggest, on March 28, that Germany should join in the proposed pact as a guarantor. Here, too, he was unsuccessful, for, on April 25, the German Government replied with a flat refusal on the ground that such a guarantee was unnecessary. In May, therefore, the Baltic States definitely rejected the proposal of a Soviet-Polish guarantee as being useless without the inclusion of Germany. The alarm of the U.S.S.R. at the withdrawal of Germany from the Disarmament Conference in October 1933, and at the German-Polish Agreement, was too great, however, to allow of the abandonment of the project altogether.

On May 18 M. Litvinov visited Geneva and discussed with M. Barthou the possibility of resuscitating the project for an Eastern Locarno, first put forward by M. Briand in 1925 at the time of the Locarno Treaty negotiations. The Quai d'Orsay proceeded to draft

a project for an Eastern European pact of security and mutual assistance, which was discussed by Sir John Simon and M. Barthou during the latter's visit to London in July, when it began to take definite shape. It was proposed to invite the Governments of the U.S.S.R., Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, and the Baltic States to enter into a pact binding them, not only to refrain from supporting any signatory committing an act of aggression against one of their number, but also to consult and concert measures in support of any signatory who should be the victim of such an act. Simultaneously with the conclusion of this pact, it was suggested, France and the U.S.S.R. should adhere in the capacity of additional guarantors to the Eastern Pact and the Locarno Pact respectively, while the whole project was to be crowned by a General Act stressing the pacific intention of the treaties and their compatibility with the Covenant of the League. 648

The British Government adopted a sympathetic attitude towards the plan; on July 12 its diplomatic representatives presented draft texts of the three treaties to the Governments of Italy, Germany, and Poland with a request for their comments, and, on the 13th, Sir John Simon stated in the House of Commons that Great Britain favoured the proposals for an Eastern Pact, on condition that Germany were included in it, that its provisions were reciprocal and not directed against any one country, that the Soviet Union entered the League, and that no fresh commitments were involved on the part of Great Britain. The Italian Government's reactions were very similar, and both countries were inclined to stress the importance of linking up the question of the Eastern Pact with negotiations for a convention giving reasonable equality of rights in armaments to Germany. Germany and Poland, on the other hand, were opposed to the pact on the ground that the security of Eastern Europe was already sufficiently guaranteed by the existing bilateral treaties. Poland's change of front in this respect is probably explained by the signature of the 'pact of understanding' with Germany in the previous January. For both Germany and Poland the question was complicated by the impossibility of leaving Lithuania out of the proposed pact, which would stabilize the *status quo* with regard to Memel and Vilna. Moreover, it was difficult for Germany to reconcile a pact with the U.S.S.R. with the tenet that the Reich constituted the chief bulwark of Europe against Communism. The German Government, therefore, replied to the British Note on September 10 that Germany could undertake no engagement which might involve entanglement in Eastern conflicts and convert German territory into a theatre of war; that, while all possibility of a multilateral pact based on the principle of non-aggression was not excluded, a pact involving mutual

●648 assistance was out of the question; that, in general, bilateral agreements were to be preferred; and, finally, that in any case the question of Germany's right to equality in respect of armaments must be settled first. The Polish reply on September 27 was understood to be on similar lines, and to have contained an objection to any guarantee of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia and Lithuania, and a stipulation that new obligations must be compatible with existing engagements (i.e. with the German-Polish Agreement).

The Baltic States themselves, not having been informed of the terms of the proposed pact, maintained a non-committal attitude, while Finland appeared to be definitely opposed to it. Official visits paid by the Polish Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, to Tallinn and Riga in July, with a view to discouraging Estonia and Latvia from supporting the pact, resulted in a cautious statement that the Governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Poland were agreed that they must await further information. Immediately afterwards, however, the Foreign Ministers of Estonia and Latvia visited Moscow, and on July 29 made identic declarations that their Governments were in principle in favour of the Eastern Pact, while reserving their final decision pending the receipt of the text and also the right to suggest amendments. On July 31 the Lithuanian Foreign Minister also arrived in Moscow to discuss the question, and a *communiqué* issued at the close of the conversations stated that Lithuania was in favour of the pact.

On the receipt of the unfavourable replies from Germany and Poland, however, negotiations were allowed to lapse for the time being. While France and the U.S.S.R. had failed to secure the conclusion of the Eastern Pact, the other parts of the proposal were carried out, and the Soviet application for admission to the League in September was successful. After M. Barthou's assassination in October, discussions were resumed by M. Laval, who was distinctly less hostile to Germany, but the gradual *rapprochement* of France and the U.S.S.R. was strengthened in December 1934 by an agreement, to which Czechoslovakia afterwards adhered; by this they agreed to continue negotiations for an Eastern Pact, and undertook not to enter into conversations with third Powers without first consulting each other.

The Eastern Pact was again discussed during M. Laval's visit to London in February 1935, when, on February 3, a joint declaration was published recommending the pursuance of general negotiations; and on March 13 the Ministers of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia called on the British Foreign Secretary and informed him that their Governments were in favour of the conclusion of an Eastern European Pact. In the conversations between Herr Hitler, Sir John

Simon, and Mr. Eden in Berlin in March 1935, the German objections to the principle of mutual assistance were reiterated, although Herr Hitler expressed readiness to conclude bilateral pacts of non-aggression with Germany's neighbours, with the exception of Lithuania for as long as the Memel dispute remained unsettled. On March 26 some progress was made when a German Note was presented to Sir John Simon; this, while stating that Germany could not accede to the Eastern Pact in its proposed form, at the same time suggested that the Powers interested in East European questions should conclude a ten-year collective agreement based on the principles of non-aggression, arbitration and conciliation, and neutrality, and containing provision for the summoning of a conference of the contracting parties, at the request of any signatory considering itself threatened with aggression, 'in order to deliberate on the situation, and, if necessary, on the steps to be taken for the maintenance of peace'. 648

The situation, however, had been radically changed by Germany's unilateral denunciation of the Armaments Clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and the proclamation of compulsory military service on March 16. As a result, the French, Soviet, and Czechoslovak Governments determined to achieve some form of pact, with or without the co-operation of Germany and Poland (who had shown an inclination to support the German counter-proposal). On April 9 it was announced that the French and Soviet Governments had agreed in principle to conclude a convention of mutual assistance, that negotiations for a similar agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia were in process, and that the Soviet Government had made similar overtures to the Baltic States. The latter, however, were reported in May to have refused to adhere to any pact which did not include Germany, although a *communiqué* issued after the periodic conference of Baltic Powers at Kaunas on May 6–8, reaffirmed their readiness to take part in a regional agreement for security.

Even after the Franco-Soviet announcement of April 9, the German Government consented on April 12, at the request of Sir John Simon, who was then at Stresa, to give an assurance that their offer of March 26 still held good, and that bi- or multilateral military engagements (such as the projected Franco-Soviet Pact) would not deter them from concluding a pact of non-aggression on the basis set out therein; but the League Council's condemnation, on April 17, of Germany's unilateral repudiation of her treaty obligations by her introduction of conscription in the previous March, together with the actual signature of pacts of mutual assistance between France and the U.S.S.R. on May 2, and between Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R.

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on May 16, dealt the final death-blows to all hope of German collaboration in a multilateral agreement. Franco-British proposals for a renewal of discussions in June were met by a statement that Germany considered her undertaking of April 12 to have lapsed in consequence of the Franco-Soviet Pact, and that her commitments would be limited in future to the offer of bilateral pacts of non-aggression. Finally, the whole question of an Eastern Locarno was pushed into the background by the Italo-Abyssinian dispute.

The Completion of the 'Little Baltic' Union, 1934–5. As early as September 1922 the Latvian Socialist leader, M. Cielens, apprehensive of the growing strength of Germany, had urged the conclusion of a defensive alliance between Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, while the spring of 1933 saw the resuscitation by M. Lindhagen, formerly Mayor of Stockholm, of the old idea of a Scandinavian-Baltic *bloc* which should include Poland. In May the Swedish Foreign Minister, M. Sandler, went so far as to state that such a pact was a desirable goal, provided that it was not directed against any other Power.

Moreover, the evil effects of the world economic crisis on the trade of the Baltic States had prompted Estonia in February 1932, and Latvia January 1933, to propose a Customs union between Lithuania and themselves. The long delay in the realization of all such schemes may be explained, in part, by the fact that the economic systems of the three countries are in no sense complementary to one another, since they are all predominantly agricultural in character. Lithuania, in particular, was more interested in the establishment of satisfactory trade regulations with Germany and Great Britain than with her Baltic neighbours; while even the Estonian-Latvian Customs Union had never been carried out in practice. After an economic conference of the three States in September 1933, however, it was decided to set up a permanent commission to prepare the way for the co-ordination of monetary policies and the increase of reciprocal trade preferences.

The conclusion of the German-Polish Agreement in January 1934, and Germany's refusal shortly afterwards to participate as a guarantor in the Baltic security pact proposed by the Soviet Government, finally precipitated a *rapprochement* between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Latvian-Estonian Treaty of Alliance concluded in 1923 was now strengthened by a Treaty of Defensive Alliance,[1] signed on February 17, 1934, and modelled on the recently concluded Balkan Pact, as well as on the Pact of Organization signed by the Little Entente in February 1933. The new agreement provided for the joint representation of the two signatories at all international

[1] For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. cl, p. 104.

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conferences by a single delegate, and for the constitution of a permanent joint council for the co-ordination of legislation and, if necessary, of political and economic action; the hitherto occasional conferences between the two countries were henceforth to take place at regular intervals. 648

Lithuania had even greater cause for apprehension with regard to Germany's intentions than had her neighbours, particularly in view of the changed relations between Poland and Germany. Moreover, the Memel dispute with the latter Power was now a source of far keener anxiety than even the Vilna controversy with Poland.[1] On April 25 the Lithuanian Government presented to Estonia and Latvia a Note proposing closer co-operation and solidarity with those Powers, on the lines of a defensive military alliance. The result was an invitation to Lithuania, on May 15, to adhere to the recently concluded Latvian-Estonian Defensive Alliance; it was clear, however, from a speech made in Warsaw by the Estonian Foreign Minister, during an official visit which was probably intended to reassure the Polish Government with regard to the pacific nature of the proposed alliance, that Estonia and Latvia had made their offer conditional on the understanding that they should in no circumstances be involved in any dispute either with Poland over Vilna, or with Germany over Memel. According to a dispatch in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of May 29, the Polish Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, made a promise that Poland would be prepared to guarantee to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Baltic States provided that the new pact was concluded in a form which she could approve.

A Treaty of Good Understanding and Co-operation[2] was finally initialed at Riga on August 29, signed at Geneva on September 12, and ratified at Riga on November 3, 1934. It was to come into force immediately for a period of ten years, after which it could either be denounced or tacitly prolonged. The three Governments undertook to confer together on questions of foreign policy of common concern, and to afford one another mutual, political, and diplomatic assistance in their international relations. In Article 3, however, the contracting parties, recognizing 'the existence of the specific problems [i.e. Memel and Vilna] which might make a concerted attitude with regard to them difficult', agreed to exclude such problems from the category of questions of 'common concern'. The conferences between the Estonian and Latvian Foreign Ministers provided for by the Treaty of Alliance of February 1934 were to be replaced by tripartite conferences meeting at least twice a year, while extraordinary sessions could be summoned at the request of one party,

[1] See below, pp. 98–100.

[2] For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. cliv, p. 93.

●648 with the approval of the others. The three Governments were to instruct their diplomatic and consular representatives abroad, and their delegates to international conferences, to establish appropriate contact. It was agreed that all disputes between the signatories should be settled amicably, that mutual agreements for attaining this end should be negotiated, that the texts of treaties concluded between any one party and a third State should be communicated immediately to the other parties, and, finally, that the Treaty should be open for accession by other States, with the consent of the contracting parties.

The first Baltic Conference under the new dispensation met at Tallinn on December 2, 1934. Besides discussing the proposed Eastern European Pact, the three Powers decided to have a single diplomatic representative at Geneva and at all international conferences, to elaborate a scheme for settling all disputes among themselves, and to issue common instructions to their diplomatic and consular representatives abroad with a view to co-ordinating their activities. A *communiqué* was also issued confirming the favourable attitude of the three Powers towards the project for an Eastern European Pact of Mutual Assistance, and their agreement to consider it as a question of common importance. In January 1935 a Bureau for the Promotion of Co-operation between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which appears to have been formed by the amalgamation of the various existing inter-State organizations for cultural *rapprochement*, met for the first time at Riga and discussed proposals for establishing common Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and for co-ordinating educational policies in the three countries. Finally, Latvia's success in obtaining a non-permanent seat on the League Council, as the representative of the three Baltic States, in October 1936, set the seal on the policy of co-operation in the sphere of foreign affairs and implied recognition of the new *bloc*.

Principal Developments, 1936–8. Throughout the maze of negotiations for an Eastern Locarno in 1934–5, one fact stood out clearly. Faced with the alternatives of risking Germany's resentment by concluding a regional pact of mutual assistance in which the U.S.S.R. was, but Germany was not, included, or of abandoning the project, the Baltic States definitely chose the latter course. Baltic diplomacy appears now to be confronted with a choice between three possible lines of action. The three States may place their trust in their ability to remain neutral, and in the development of closer co-operation among themselves on the basis of the Pact of Baltic Union; they may follow Poland's example of *rapprochement* with Germany; or they may engage in an alliance with the U.S.S.R. In spite of the growing sense of insecurity, intensified by the failure of the League

of Nations to prevent the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, as well as by the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 1935—which was regarded in some quarters as virtually handing over control of the Baltic Sea to the German Navy—the Baltic States have not yet been faced with the necessity of making a definite choice between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. 648

Finland is the one Power in the Baltic which can entertain any hope of being able to remain neutral in the event of a war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. She would have nothing to gain by joining an anti-German coalition; moreover, her orientation towards the Scandinavian States inclines her to a policy of neutrality. During 1936 relations between Finland and the U.S.S.R. became somewhat strained, partly as a result of the Antikainen trial and of various frontier incidents, partly owing to allegations—vigorously denied—that Finland was contemplating joining a German anti-Soviet *bloc*. Towards the end of the year, however, relations were somewhat improved. It was arranged that the Finnish Foreign Minister, M. Holsti, should pay an official visit to Moscow early in 1937; in a statement to *The Times* on January 21, 1937, he denied current rumours that Finland was involved in any political combination against the U.S.S.R. A *communiqué* issued by the Soviet Foreign Office at the close of his visit in February stated that it was felt that there was a 'good possibility of developing good-neighbour relations' between the two countries, and of useful collaboration in the direction of collective security.

There have also been signs of a *rapprochement* between Finland and the Baltic States. In May 1936 the Finnish Foreign Minister, M. Hackzell, visited Tallinn and Kaunas, and Riga, where he made a speech welcoming the closer union of the three States as an indispensable condition of Finland's collaboration with them in the future. During 1937 the Latvian Foreign Minister, M. Munters, visited Finland in April, and M. Hackzell's successor, M. Holsti, paid official visits to Estonia in August and Latvia in October; while in September the Estonian President was entertained at Helsinki. A trade agreement, concluded between Estonia and Finland in the same month, was criticized in Latvia as according to Finland special facilities which undermined the Baltic Entente.

Of the three Baltic States proper, Estonia and Latvia, in particular, appear likely to cling to the principle of complete neutrality as long as it seems at all feasible, but in 1936 they showed signs of wavering slightly towards closer relations with the U.S.S.R. At the end of April 1936 the Chiefs-of-Staff of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania paid a courtesy visit to Moscow as the guests of Marshal Jegorov. Almost immediately afterwards, however, the fourth Conference of

● 648 the Baltic Union met at Tallinn on May 7, and a *communiqué* was issued on the 9th in which the three Powers reaffirmed their fidelity to the principles of the League and their intention of supporting every proposal for the increase of its prestige. On the principle that peace is indivisible they demanded equal guarantees of security for all parts of Europe, and offered their collaboration in working out a general system of security, without rejecting the principle of regional agreements so long as these were kept within the framework of such a general system or of the League. At another conference in Riga on December 9–12 the Latvian Foreign Minister, M. Munters, delivered a pessimistic speech drawing attention to the general state of tension in Europe, and stating that, while the Baltic States had always preferred collective action in the sphere of international relations, they admitted that there might be other methods which would yield good results, although it would be a mistake to adopt them in a spirit of intransigence. The Conference reaffirmed its unshaken confidence in the League, and its complete unanimity with regard to the existing problems. The three Powers dispatched to the Secretary-General a statement of their views on the urgent necessities for League reform.

Until 1937 there were no marked signs of a further *rapprochement* between the Baltic States and the U.S.S.R., and, in fact, their friendly relations suffered a slight setback in consequence of a fiery attack on Fascism delivered by the new secretary of the Communist party in the U.S.S.R., M. Zdanov, at the All-Union Congress in Moscow at the end of November 1936, when he was reported to have said: 'We wish to live in peace with the Baltic countries, but if these tiny peoples allow big adventurers to use their territories for big adventures, we shall widen our little window on to Europe with the help of the Red Army.'[1] The resentment aroused by this ultimatum was hardly allayed by the assurance given on December 2 by the Soviet Minister in Riga that the speech reflected no aggressive intentions on the part of the U.S.S.R. towards the Baltic States. Shortly afterwards the Soviet Minister in Lithuania, M. Karski, speaking at Kaunas, warned the Baltic States that the U.S.S.R. was the only Power which could and would protect their independence and territorial integrity.

This mixture of threats and promises was followed up, in February 1937, by an official visit of Marshal Jegorov to the three Baltic capitals, ostensibly to return the courtesy visits to Moscow paid by the Baltic Chiefs-of-Staff in the spring of 1936. Moreover, on the occasion of M. Munters's courtesy visit to Moscow in the following June, M. Litvinov publicly stated that 'Latvia's geographical posi-

[1] See the *Daily Telegraph*, November 30, 1936.

tion is such that the U.S.S.R. cannot help being interested in the maintenance of her complete independence'. In August a Soviet press delegation visited the three capitals.

Although the future policy of the three States cannot be predicted, it is likely to be influenced by the consideration that, whereas the Soviet Union appears to be satisfied with its existing frontiers and as anxious as they are to preserve the territorial *status quo*, Nazi Germany has repeatedly avowed the necessity and desirability of eastward expansion, already so nearly—though not quite—achieved by Imperial Germany during the World War by the Treaty of Brest Litovsk.[1]

Meanwhile, Germany herself has been pursuing, during the last few years, a policy somewhat similar to that of the Soviet Union after the War. While, on the one hand, the Government declares its desire for friendly relations with the Baltic States, and has, in fact, since 1936, actually modified considerably its attitude towards Lithuania, the Nazi party, on the other hand, is actively engaged in the organization of subversive movements within the frontiers of the three States.

In January 1936 the German Foreign Minister, Baron von Neurath, stated, in an interview with the *Niederdeutscher Beobachter*, that Germany was anxious to establish good relations with the Baltic States, but that, although economic relations were improving—and here he instanced recently concluded trade agreements with Estonia and Latvia—political relations must always be predominantly influenced by the treatment accorded to the German minorities by their Governments. He went on to state that strict observance of the Memel Statute was an essential condition of a return to normal relations with Lithuania; referring to the recent law in Latvia liquidating the German guilds,[2] he observed that, while Germany sympathized with the efforts towards national consolidation which were being made by the Latvian Government, she objected to their being conducted at the expense of the German minority. Finally, Baron von Neurath denied that the attempted *putsch* of the Liberators in Tallinn in 1935 had been inspired from Germany, and declared that German-Estonian relations were entirely satisfactory.

A different picture of the situation is presented, however, by a long list of the plots laid bare, and illicit movements suppressed, in the Baltic countries themselves during the last two years. To name only a few, Nazi organizations for spreading German propaganda in Latvia were discovered in January 1934, and again in April 1936, while in October 1934 the Latvian branch of the *Baltische Bruderschaft*, a society working for the assimilation of the Baltic countries

[1] See above, p. 17.

[2] See above, p. 36.

with Germany, was suppressed. In Lithuania the Kaunas *putsch* of June 1934 was commonly attributed to German inspiration, while in April 1936 several persons were arrested for smuggling across the Lithuanian-East Prussian frontier large quantities of anti-Lithuanian propaganda printed in Germany, inciting the Lithuanian peasants to refuse the payment of taxes. In Estonia a 'monster-trial' was held in August 1936 of 154 Estonian members of the Liberators' movement, charged with organizing a *putsch* under instructions from Germany. It is impossible to say how far German propaganda and financial assistance were really responsible for this and other similar movements, but there was undoubtedly some ground for complaint on the part of the Governments of the Baltic States.

The sudden change in Germany's policy towards Lithuania in 1936 seems the more startling in view of these barely disguised activities. On February 11 it was announced that, at the request of the Lithuanian Government, and in view of the fact that, since the recent elections in Memel, the Directorate and *Landtag* had been functioning in accordance with the terms of the Statute, the German Government was now willing to enter into negotiations for the resumption of normal trade relations. On August 5 a new trade treaty was finally concluded between the two countries, together with supplementary agreements regulating payments, border relations, and the labour rights of their respective nationals.

Shortly after the initiation of the German-Lithuanian trade negotiations in February 1936, Herr Hitler, in a Memorandum handed to the Locarno Powers on March 7 on the occasion of the German military reoccupation of the Rhineland, and again in a Note of March 31, had renewed his earlier offer to conclude bilateral pacts of non-aggression with the States on Germany's north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers, and had added (in the Memorandum) that, since the Lithuanian Government had to some extent corrected its attitude with regard to Memel, he no longer excluded Lithuania from this offer. The French Government pointed out, in its reply of April 8, that Germany had refused to admit that such pacts could be included in a system of collective security, or that they could be accompanied by guarantees of mutual assistance, and emphasized that France 'could not conceive of a settlement of western security for which she would have to disinterest herself in the security of the rest of Europe'. The British *questionnaire*, handed to the German Foreign Minister on May 7, included an inquiry as to whether the German Government suggested that the proposed pacts should follow the general outline of such pacts given to Sir John Simon by Baron von Neurath on March 26, 1935, and whether it agreed that they might also be guaranteed by mutual assistance arrangements; the

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British Government also expressed the hope that the German Government could see its way to interpreting the words 'Germany's south-eastern and north-eastern frontiers' so as to cover also at least the Soviet Union, Latvia, and Estonia, as well as the States actually contiguous to Germany. The German Government vouchsafed no reply to the British *questionnaire*. 648

In January 1937 there were symptoms of a recrudescence of hostility when the German press published allegations that the Lithuanian Government contemplated the reorganization of the Army under the supervision of Soviet officers, and that there was talk in Kaunas of large deliveries of arms from the U.S.S.R.

While Lithuania's relations with Germany on the whole improved, the same could not be said of her relations with Poland; and indeed, they were a matter of concern not only to the latter, who in 1936 showed a desire for reconciliation—albeit on her own terms—but also to the Latvian[1] and Estonian Governments, who realized that until the Vilna dispute had been liquidated the relations of the Baltic States with Poland could not be as close as they would like. How the Polish Government, in March 1938, finally took matters into their own hands, and forced the issue by presenting Lithuania with an ultimatum, backed by the concentration of troops on the frontier, is related in the following chapter.[2] It may be suggested here, however, that once the Vilna controversy has been settled, Poland's scheme for a neutral *bloc* stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea may be nearer to realization than at any time since the World War.

VI. SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF LITHUANIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

1. Vilna

Up to the Treaty of Union of Lublin in 1569, Vilna had been the capital of the Lithuanian Kingdom; by the time of the partitions of Poland and the Russian annexation of Lithuania at the end of the eighteenth century, however, it had become a centre of Polish, rather than of Lithuanian, culture. In 1918 the new Polish and Lithuanian States both laid claim to possession of the city and of the district surrounding it.[3] 648 361 [177]

When the Germans evacuated Lithuania at the end of 1918, Vilna was proclaimed the capital of the new Republic and renamed Vilnius.

[1] At the end of March 1936 the Latvian Foreign Minister visited Warsaw to discuss Polish-Lithuanian relations.

[2] See below, pp. 92–3.

[3] The ethnographical bases of the rival claims are somewhat confused. The Lithuanians claim that the only reliable census was that of 1861, which showed a proportion of 74·3 per cent. Lithuanian- to 16·2 per cent. Polish-speaking inhabitants of the relevant parts of the 162

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In January 1919, however, the Lithuanian Government had to retire to Kaunas before the Bolshevik invaders; and when these in their turn retreated before the combined attacks of Lithuanian and Polish forces, it was the Poles who entered Vilna first on April 20, and who remained in possession until the second Bolshevik offensive in the summer of 1920. On July 12, 1920, Lithuania concluded a treaty of peace with Soviet Russia at Moscow, in which the province and city of Vilna were ceded to her by Russia; three days later the Red troops drove the Poles out of the city, and, on their evacuation during the Polish counter-offensive in August, they handed it over to the Lithuanians.

Tension between the latter and the Poles now became acute; fighting broke out in the Suvalki district, and on September 5 Poland appealed to the League of Nations. At the instance of the Supreme Allied Council the two countries agreed to accept a provisional frontier, known as the 'Curzon Line', giving the Suvalki sector to the Poles and the Vilna district to Lithuania; and an armistice convention to this effect was signed at Suvalki on October 7. But on the previous day an ostensibly unauthorized[1] Polish force under General Zeligowski entered the town. The General proclaimed a free and independent 'Republic of Central Lithuania', and constituted a Government consisting of two Poles, two White Russians, and two Lithuanians. On October 12 Poland concluded a preliminary peace with the R.S.F.S.R. at Riga, the first Article of which defined the Soviet-Polish frontier and stipulated that the allocation of the territories situated to the east of it under dispute between Poland and Lithuania should be exclusively settled by those two countries themselves.

The Zeligowski *coup* was followed by long-drawn-out and fruitless negotiations, first before the League Council, then in Brussels under the presidency of the Belgian Foreign Minister, M. Hymans, and finally at Geneva again. Various suggestions, e.g. the conduct of a plebiscite, the constitution of a federal State on the Swiss principle,

162 Vilna Government. The Poles state that the proportion of Polish inhabitants has steadily increased since 1905, the figures for the whole province of Vilna being as follows:

Census of 1897:	17	per cent.	Lithuanians,	9	per cent.	Poles.
„ 1909:	13	„	„	16	„	„
„ 1916:	10	„	„	30	„	„
„ 1919:	10	„	„	62	„	„

The censuses conducted during the German and Polish occupations cannot, however, be taken as reliable, especially as adherence to the Catholic faith was often taken as a proof of Polish nationality. It seems clear that the Poles have a considerable numerical superiority over the Lithuanians in the city of Vilna, while the reverse is the case in most of the country districts. Actually, the prevailing elements are the Jews in the city, and the White Russians outside it.

[1] Later, however, General Pilsudski admitted—and gloried in—his responsibility for this act.

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and so forth, were rejected.[1] Finally, in January 1922, the Council, despairing of a settlement, gave up the case and withdrew its commissioners from the territory, thus virtually leaving events to take their own course. A year later the Poles, rightly judging that every one was weary of the controversy, appealed to the Conference of Ambassadors, in February 1923, for official recognition of their possession of Vilna. On March 15, acting in virtue of Article 87 of the Treaty of Versailles,[2] the Conference finally disposed of the matter by laying down the Polish-Lithuanian frontier in such a way as to recognize the *status quo*.[3]

As between Poland and Lithuania, however, the quarrel was by no means settled. Indeed, up till March 1938, a state of virtual blockade existed on the frontier,[4] nor were diplomatic relations between the two countries ever resumed until that date. Lithuania refused to accept the Ambassadors' decision, but her request in June 1924 for a fresh conference was rejected. The chances of a settlement were not improved either by the Vatican's recognition of Vilna as a Polish diocese in 1925, or by the conclusion in 1926 of a Soviet-Lithuanian Pact of Non-aggression in which the U.S.S.R. reaffirmed its recognition of the Lithuanian claim to Vilna.[5] Under the dictatorships established in 1926 by Marshal Pilsudski in Poland and M. Voldemaras in Lithuania, mutual hostility was stimulated—in Lithuania's case deliberately—in spite of the League Council's efforts at reconciliation in December 1927 and again in September 1928.

After the downfall of M. Voldemaras in 1929, a certain *détente* was

[1] The Poles, however, conducted a plebiscite of their own on January 8, 1922, in the form of elections to a Diet which subsequently voted for union with Poland. The majority of the Lithuanian population in the country districts, and of the Jews in the city of Vilna, abstained from voting, and only Polish deputies were returned. The report of the League's Military Commission of Control pointed out that 'the control of the elections was entirely in the hands of the interested party', and that they were carried out under military occupation.

[2] Article 87 provided that 'the boundaries of Poland not laid down in the present Treaty will be subsequently determined by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers'.

[3] Moreover, on February 1, 1923, the Council of the League had accepted a Polish proposal that questions concerning non-Polish inhabitants of the Vilna district should henceforth be subject to the normal minorities procedure; thus, instead of being placed automatically on the Council's agenda, they were to be dealt with by a Committee of Three. This procedure was accepted by Lithuania in the minority dispute submitted to the League in October 1927.

[4] In 1925 an agreement was reached on frontier and river traffic and on postal communications, and in 1926 the Niemen was declared open to rafting; but, in fact, the frontier remained closed, since the two Powers were unable to agree as to the conditions on which it should be reopened—the Polish Government insisting on, and the Lithuanian Government refusing, the simultaneous renewal of diplomatic relations. Lithuania also persistently refused to concede consular relations to Poland, or to make a railway agreement. In 1930 the Permanent Court at The Hague gave a decision in her favour on the question as to whether she was bound to open the Landswarow-Kalkiordoys railway for traffic.

[5] See above, pp. 71-2.

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noticeable, especially when the Vilna dispute became gradually overshadowed by Lithuania's quarrel with Germany over Memel. Neither an exchange of official visits in 1934, however, nor the overtures for the resumption of diplomatic relations made by Poland towards the end of 1936 and early in 1937, resulted in any amelioration of the situation, the Lithuanian Government not being prepared to consider more than the opening of the frontier. On February 5, 1937, Colonel Beck told the Polish *Seym* that, since no satisfactory response had been received from the Lithuanian Government, Poland was now 'compelled to withdraw its faith in Lithuania's peaceful intentions and, in future, to adjust its Lithuanian policy in accordance with the methods applied by Lithuania in its attitude towards Poland'. None the less, on March 7, the Polish Foreign Office issued a *communiqué* to the effect that Poland was ready at any time to proceed with the task of normalizing her relations with Lithuania, unconditionally and on the basis of mutual recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-aggression.

In the meantime, there had been increased tension in January, when the Polish authorities dissolved a Lithuanian cultural association in Vilna, suppressed a Lithuanian daily paper, and arrested several leading Lithuanians on charges of infringement of the currency laws. Frontier incidents occurred in January, and again in December 1937, when Polish soldiers were alleged, in each case, to have moved a frontier post a few yards into Lithuanian territory. In February 1938, demonstrations against the suppression of another Lithuanian paper, and the arrest of its editor, led to the placing of a ban on the activities of the Nationalist party, and to the internment of three of its leaders.

Finally, a crisis was precipitated on March 11, 1938, by a clash between Lithuanian and Polish frontier guards, in which one Polish guard was killed. On the 13th the Polish Government issued a statement accusing the Lithuanians of provocation, and threatening to take measures befitting the seriousness of the situation. The concentration of troops was reported on both sides of the frontier, while anti-Lithuanian demonstrations occurred in the Polish Senate and in the streets of Warsaw. A proposal of the Lithuanian Government that the incident should be investigated locally by a mixed commission was rejected by the Polish Government as unacceptable, and on March 17—significantly, perhaps, at a time when international relationships had just sustained the shock of the German annexation of Austria—Poland presented a forty-eight-hour ultimatum demanding the unconditional establishment of regular diplomatic relations by March 31; and stipulating that there must be no discussion of these proposals.

The Estonian and Latvian Governments appear to have informed 648 ●
Lithuania that they regarded the establishment of normal diplomatic 361
relations with Poland as highly desirable; while the French and British diplomatic representatives in both capitals used their influence to urge an amicable settlement. On March 19 the Lithuanian Government accepted without reserve all the Polish propositions, and received a reply on the 20th in which the Polish Government assured the new Lithuanian Legation in Warsaw 'all conditions of normal activity'.

Negotiations between the two countries were begun almost immediately, and proceeded so successfully that by the beginning of June three conventions had been concluded for the opening of postal and railway communications, and of river navigation, while further agreements relating to aerial communications and to a commercial treaty were under negotiation.

Although the Vilna dispute has reference to an area of inconsiderable economic importance, it has had far-reaching effects both on the domestic history of Lithuania and on the relations of the Baltic States with one another and with the Soviet Union. These have been described above, and it must suffice here to recall that the efforts to achieve Baltic solidarity, in relation first to Soviet Russia and later to Nazi Germany, have always been complicated by the enduring hostility between Lithuania and Poland.

2. Memel (Klaipeda)

Introductory. The Memel Territory, consisting of the port of 131
Memel and a strip of land about 70 miles long and from 10 to 20 miles broad, is bounded on the south by the East Prussian frontier and on the north-east by what used to be the pre-War Russo-German frontier but is now Lithuanian territory. It controls the right bank of the Niemen (Nemunas), a waterway of great importance for the floating of timber down to the Baltic from the hinterland, and embraces nearly three-quarters of the seaboard between the East Prussian and Latvian frontiers; without it, Lithuania would have no port on the Baltic Sea.

The city of Memel was founded in 1252 by the German Order of 361
the Sword, from whom it was taken over in 1328 by the Teutonic Order, as a centre for the conquest and conversion of the Borussians; on the dissolution of the Teutonic Order in the sixteenth century, the city and surrounding territory passed into the hands of the Hohenzollerns. By the fifteenth century the indigenous population [167]
had been virtually exterminated, but Lithuanian immigration was encouraged by the German rulers until the eighteenth century, when a policy of German colonization was first adopted. Even then the

361 Lithuanian population was allowed complete cultural liberty until after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870; nor was the campaign then initiated for the Germanization of the district ever carried to such extreme lengths as to alienate the loyalty of the Lithuanians to the [162] Crown. In 1918 the population of the city itself was almost entirely German, while the bulk of the inhabitants in the country districts were of Germanized Lithuanian-speaking stock, although a certain number were bilingual.[1] The majority had adopted the Protestant faith of their German rulers.

361 438 Memel's prosperity, under the German Empire, was based on the timber trade and its dependent industries; a considerable amount of flax, grain, and other agricultural produce was also exported, and, largely owing to German enterprise, iron foundries, shipbuilding yards, breweries, and chemical factories had been set up.

● 648 361 *The Post-War Settlement.* At the Peace Conference in Paris there was some discussion of a French proposal to constitute a Greater Poland, which should include the whole of Lithuania as well as an outlet to the sea at Memel. Eventually, however, it was decided to detach the Memel district from Germany with a view to handing it over to the new Lithuanian Republic, if and when that country should have received *de jure* recognition. In spite of German protests,[2] therefore, a clause was inserted in the Treaty of Versailles (Article 99) to the effect that Germany renounced all right to the territory in favour of the Allied Powers, and undertook to accept the settlement made in regard to it 'particularly in so far as concerns the nationality of the inhabitants'.

Even after the *de jure* recognition of Lithuania by the Allied Powers, which was delayed, owing to the Vilna dispute, until November 1922, the future of Memel remained undecided. In the meantime, the administration of the territory had been taken over on behalf of the Allies by Général Odry, who was later replaced by a French High Commissioner, M. Petisné.[3] Alarmed by a French

[1]

162 191 TABLE 11. *Population of the Memel Territory.*

Date of census	*German-speaking*	*Lithuanian-speaking*	*Bilingual*	*Memel-landers*	*Others*	*Total*
1910	71,191	67,345	1,970	..	260	140,766
1925	61,671	39,106	..	35,690	5,373	141,840

[1] In a Note of May 29, 1919, Germany contested that the inhabitants were predominantly German—the city of Memel, in particular, being a purely German town—and had never desired such a separation; moreover, they offered to establish a free zone in the harbour of Memel, in which Poland, as well as Lithuania, should be accorded liberal privileges. The Allied Powers replied that the district as a whole was predominantly Lithuanian in origin and speech, and that the port of Memel was the only sea outlet for Lithuania.

[2] A Committee of Seven, which had been appointed by a preliminary Parliament (elected

1. [i.e. Memel -- Analyst]

proposal for the constitution of Memel as a Free City on the model of Danzig, the Lithuanian Government finally decided to follow the example of the successful Polish *coup* in Vilna in 1920. A rising, organized by bands of Lithuanians who had crossed the frontier on January 10, 1923, was followed by an invasion of Lithuanian troops, on the very day when French troops were marching into the Ruhr. The French garrison was forced to give way on the 15th, a local Diet was summoned which voted the union of the Territory with Lithuania, subject to a mild degree of autonomy, and a Provisional Government was set up. 648 ● 361

A special Inter-Allied Commission, dispatched to investigate the situation, virtually acquiesced in this *fait accompli*, withdrew the French High Commissioner and troops, and appointed a new and more moderate, but none the less predominantly Lithuanian, government. After refusing to accept a convention drafted by the Conference of Ambassadors, chiefly because of a proposal to allow Poland a share in the management of the port, the Government in Kaunas consented on May 17, 1924, to sign a revised convention drafted by a Commission of the League of Nations under the chairmanship of Mr. Norman Davis.

By the Memel Convention of 1924,[1] which came into force on August 25, 1925, the Allied Powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) transferred to Lithuania, subject to certain conditions, all the rights ceded to them by Germany over the Memel Territory, which was henceforth to constitute, under Lithuanian sovereignty, a unit enjoying autonomy within certain limits. The Statute appended provides for the constitution of a Chamber of Representatives elected for three years by citizens of the Territory, by universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage,[2] and for the appointment of a Governor by the President of the Lithuanian Republic. The Governor must promulgate the laws voted by the Memel Diet unless he vetoes them as exceeding the competence of the Territory,[3] or as being incompatible with Lithuania's Constitution or international obligations. He must convoke the Diet at the request of one-third of its members, and may dissolve it in agreement with the Directorate, 642 361

by the district assemblies) to carry on the administration in conjunction with a German High Commissioner during the Paris Conference, was retained as a Directory under the French administration.

[1] For text see British White Paper, Cmd. 2541.

[2] The Territory also sends deputies to the Lithuanian Diet, elected in accordance with the Lithuanian electoral law.

[3] Local affairs, including public worship, education, social welfare and labour legislation, organization of the judicial system, local taxation, &c., are within the competence of the Memel authorities. The police force is local, but is entitled to request the assistance of the Lithuanian police; the judiciary, which is also local but subject to the control of a special department of the Lithuanian Supreme Court, is appointed by the Directorate.

642 in which case elections must take place within six weeks. The ad-
361 ministration is entrusted to a Directorate of five members, who must be citizens of the Territory; the President is appointed by the Governor, and himself appoints the other members, but the Directorate holds office only so long as it possesses the confidence of the Diet.

● 648 It is stipulated in an Annex that the Lithuanian Government shall
504 conform to the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles concerning the Niemen; that the port of Memel shall be considered as a port of international concern, and subject to the recommendation adopted by the Barcelona Conference; and that the harbour shall be administered by a Harbour Board consisting of three members, appointed respectively by the Lithuanian Government, the Memel Territory, and the League's Communications and Transit Organization.[1]

648 It is important to note that the Memel Convention is not an
361 instrument of the League of Nations, although members of the Council may draw the attention of the Council to any infraction of its provisions, and Lithuania undertakes to submit all disputes between her and the other signatories to the Permanent Court of International Justice, whose decision is binding. Moreover, apart from the recognition of German and Lithuanian on the same footing as official languages, the Minorities Declaration made by Lithuania respecting the rest of her territories applies to Memel also. Unlike Danzig, however, Memel is placed under the guarantee of the four Allied Powers signatory to the Convention, and not under that of the League.

642 *The Working of the Convention, 1925–32.* The Constitution thus
361 imposed on Memel created an extremely difficult situation. It became
578 clear after the first elections to the Diet, when twenty-seven Germans and only two Lithuanians were returned, that the great majority of the population was anti-Lithuanian in sympathy. Yet the Governor appointed by the Lithuanian Government was expected to choose a Directorate having the confidence of the Diet. If he did so, he was bound before very long to lose the confidence of the Government at Kaunas; if he did not, his rule was unconstitutional. The result was that events in Memel tended to repeat themselves in a more or less regular series. Elections were usually followed at first by a period of relative calm; then came a phase of conflict between the Diet and the Governor, accompanied by frequent changes of Directorate; this was terminated by the dissolution of the Diet, and a period of unconstitutional administration by the Governor; finally Germany would appeal to the League Council, and the Governor

[1] The League nominee is to give special attention to international economic interests, but must not be a national of any riparian State of the Niemen; thus Lithuania gained her point in the dispute as to whether Poland should be represented on the Board.

would feel compelled to allow new elections. Between 1925 and 1933 this cycle recurred three times.

Between 1925 and 1927 three Directorates fell in quick succession owing to no-confidence votes by the Diet, until, in February 1927, the Governor dissolved the Diet and carried on the administration by a Directorate of his own nomination. As a result of an appeal to the League Council by Germany,[1] new elections were held in August, when the German parties lost four seats to the Lithuanians.[2]

A peaceful phase followed the elections of 1927, owing to the fact that M. Voldemaras' anti-Polish policy inclined him towards a *rapprochement* with Germany; but, with the rise to power of his less Germanophil successor, M. Sleževičius, in 1929, and with the introduction of a high tariff on agricultural produce in Germany in 1930, tension increased again. During 1930 the Diet twice voted no-confidence in the Directorate, and in August it was dissolved by the Governor, Colonel Merkys. Complaints referring to the prolongation of martial law, which had been extended to Memel on its introduction in Lithuania in 1926, and to various alleged violations of the Constitution, were now addressed to the League Council by members of the Diet and by Germany. The latter, however, withdrew her petition after conversations between the German and Lithuanian Foreign Ministers.

Again, after the elections of October 1930, in which the Lithuanians won five out of the twenty-nine seats, there was a comparative lull,[3] owing to the appointment of Herr Böttcher, a German Memellander, as President of the Directorate. In December 1931, however, the Lithuanian Government accused Herr Böttcher of acting unconstitutionally in conducting negotiations with a foreign Power during a private visit to Berlin. In spite of receiving a vote of confidence from the Diet on his return, Herr Böttcher was arrested, and an entirely Lithuanian Directorate was appointed on February 6, 1932. Germany then brought the matter before the League Council, which adopted a report emphasizing the 'absolute necessity' of establishing without delay a Directorate enjoying the confidence of the Diet, but virtually transferred the responsibility for handling the dispute to the Allied Powers. When the Diet voted no-confidence in a new Directorate headed by a Lithuanian, M. Simaitis, the Government

[1] For an account of the disputes between Germany and Lithuania over the question of procedure in petitions to the Council, see I. F. D. Morrow, *The Peace Settlement in the German-Polish Borderlands* (Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 446–8.

[2] Probably owing to the emigration of thousands who opted for German nationality.

[3] In May 1931, however, Germany laid before the Council complaints over financial questions and over the continuance of martial law. The former were finally settled by a Financial Agreement signed on August 18, 1932; the latter was left to be handled by the Allied Powers, who in June 1931 addressed a joint Note to the Lithuanian Government recommending the abolition of martial law, without any result whatever.

642 dissolved it on March 22, in spite of a warning from the Allied
361 Powers. The Powers, therefore, instituted proceedings against
648 Lithuania at the Hague Court on April 11.[1] Judgement was not delivered until August 11,[1] when the Court decided that the Governor was entitled, for the protection of the interests of the Lithuanian State, and if no other action could be taken, to dismiss the President of the Directorate in case of serious acts which violated the Memel Convention, or which were calculated to prejudice the sovereignty of Lithuania; that such dismissal did not by itself involve the dismissal of the other members of the Directorate; that the dismissal of Herr Böttcher and the appointment of M. Simaitis were in order; but that the dissolution of the Diet was not in order.

Meanwhile the elections for the new Diet had taken place in May, and, in spite of German accusations that the Lithuanians had been guilty of shameless manipulation, the latter only succeeded in securing five seats. As usual the elections were followed by a peaceful interlude, in consequence of the appointment of a more liberal-minded Governor, M. Bylys, to succeed Colonel Merkys, and of a German President of the Directorate, Dr. Schreiber. In August a financial agreement was concluded between the Lithuanian Government and the Memel Territory.

648 *The Advent of National-Socialism.* The Schreiber Directorate's chances of stabilizing conditions were to a large extent destroyed by the accession of Herr Hitler to power in Germany in January 1933, and were still further diminished by the German-Polish *rapprochement* of 1934, up till when the common hostility of Germany and Lithuania to Poland had exercised a moderating influence on their mutual relations.

361 In the summer of 1933 two Nazi parties were founded in Memel;
668 the first, led by Pastor von Sass, with a Left Wing programme, was
661 called the *Christliche-Sozialistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (C.S.A.): the
648 second and more conservative, under Dr. Neumann, was known as the *Sovog* (*Sozialistische Volksorganisation*).[2] Alive to the danger of the movement, the Lithuanian Government in November 1933 appointed a new Governor, Dr. Novakas, to suppress it. Numerous foreign officials were dismissed—most of them citizens of the Reich; labour permits issued to foreigners in private employment were withdrawn; a law for the Defence of the State enacted on February 8, 1934, penalizing members of seditious organizations, was followed by the dissolution of both the Nazi parties and the arrest of Dr.

1. [1932 -- Anal. 1]

[1] For text see *The Permanent Court of International Justice*, Series A/B, No. 49, p. 337.

[2] The Nazi party in Germany supported the *Sovog* in preference to the C.S.A., and appears to have attempted in July to unify the two parties by recognizing Dr. Neumann as leader of all the Nazis in Memel.

Neumann and other leaders of the *Sovog*. This action called forth a German Note of protest, and the suspension of all local goods traffic across the frontier.[1]

In June Dr. Schreiber was dismissed on a charge of encouraging the Nazi movement, and was replaced at first by Dr. Reizgys, and later by M. Bruvelaitis, both of whom were Memellanders and appointed purely Lithuanian Directorates. The authorities now pursued the policy of reducing the Diet to impotence, firstly by disqualifying members of the Diet who belonged to 'seditious organisations',[2] and secondly by arranging that all the Lithuanian deputies should absent themselves, so that, on the rare occasions when the Diet met, a quorum was not present. In December the trial of 122 Nazis began in Kaunas, on charges of conspiracy for the reunion of Memel with Germany through armed revolt. Four prisoners were also accused of the murder of an official named Jesuttis, who was alleged to have betrayed Nazi plans to the Lithuanian authorities. Undeterred by indirect German pressure exerted through the reinforcement of troops on the frontier, or by representations made by the Guarantor Powers, the Court delivered heavy sentences in March 1935, including four death sentences on the murder charge.[3]

As a result of an appeal made by Herr Hitler during the visit of Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden to Berlin in March, a joint Note was addressed to Lithuania by Great Britain, France, and Italy on April 19, 1935,[4] urging an early meeting of the Diet, and the constitution of a Directorate possessing its confidence; the Lithuanian reply was unsatisfactory, but, in the meantime, M. Novakas had been succeeded as Governor by the more moderate M. Kurkauskas, and the German parties had been invited to collaborate in the reconstitution of the Directorate. Shortly after their refusal to do so, the three-year term of the Diet expired, on May 4, and new elections were not held until September. In the meantime the electoral law was amended in such a way as to deprive several candidates (including Dr. Schreiber) of the now united front of pro-German parties, known as the *Einheitsliste*,[5] of their electoral rights and Lithuanian citizen-

[1] Even the transit through Germany of goods destined for Lithuania was later prohibited.

[2] The non-Nazi, but German, *Landwirtschaftspartei* was now included in this category.

[3] These were later commuted to life imprisonment.

[4] In July 1934 the Powers had, in reply to a German Note complaining of the situation, adopted the line that complaints should be addressed to the League Council; and, although a committee of jurists appointed by the Council to consider two petitions presented by the Vice-President of the Diet in the following September had pronounced that infringements of the Statute had taken place, the matter had not been brought up for further discussion by the Council—owing, perhaps, to the pre-occupation of the Powers with the Saar Plebiscite.

[5] The *Einheitsliste* included all the German parties except the Social-Democrats, as well as a number of Lithuanians. It aimed ostensibly at the maintenance of the autonomous régime, but was supported by vigorous propaganda from the German Reich.

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1938 RB1 Baltic States RB1
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ship, and to disenfranchise a large number of voters. Influenced, however, by Herr Hitler's bitter denunciations in the Reichstag on September 18, and by a further *démarche* of the three Powers on the 12th, the Lithuanian Government at last agreed to make certain concessions with regard to the German parties and to the conduct of the elections, which were watched by the British *Chargé d'affaires* at Kaunas, and were on the whole fairly conducted. The net result of all these efforts was the election of twenty-four candidates of the *Einheitsliste* and five Lithuanians; thus the latter failed to gain a single seat.

The usual post-election period of appeasement ensued; for—after the failure of two attempts to form a Directorate under a Lithuanian President—M. Baldžius, a Lithuanian Memellander and a member of the *Einheitsliste*, was appointed President.[1] The new Directorate, which received a vote of confidence from the Diet in December, repealed a number of anti-Nazi measures and began the reinstatement of officials who had been dismissed on political grounds. During 1936, moreover, there was a marked improvement in German-Lithuanian relations, beginning with a Lithuanian request for British mediation at the end of 1935, and continuing with a *rapprochement* initiated by Germany with startling suddenness in the spring of 1936;[2] and economic conditions in Memel were considerably benefited by a frontier traffic agreement concluded between the two countries in the following August. In October M. Kurkauskas resigned and was replaced by M. Kubilius, a Lithuanian lawyer who had hitherto played little part in political life. Although there were fresh arrests and trials of Nazis during 1936–7, on the other hand a large number of amnesties were granted,[3] and in February 1937 the British Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs was able to inform the House of Commons that 'the political position in the Memel territory is now generally satisfactory'.[4]

Note on the Economic Position of Memel

The economic prosperity of the Memel Territory is now entirely dependent upon that of Lithuania. This is primarily due to the fact

[1] In January 1936 M. Baldžius was replaced by M. Diomons, also a member of the *Einheitsliste*.

[2] See above, p. 88.

[3] Most of the National-Socialists imprisoned have now been released, including Pastor von Sass (in 1937) and Dr. Neumann (in 1938).

[4] Unfortunately, however, a fresh occasion for agitation was provided by the Kaunas Government's law of September 6, 1937, expropriating, against compensation, some 440 hectares of territory belonging to 24 German landowners, for military purposes and harbour development. A violent campaign ensued in the German press; and on September 25 M. Baldžius informed the Memel Diet that the Directorate had protested to the Governor against the law on the ground that the expropriation of property was exclusively the concern of the Memel authorities, and had declined to co-operate in its execution. The German Government themselves (although, not being signatories of the Convention, they had no

436 working capital through the *Eesti Pank*. Meanwhile, though the
652 bank was able to keep the mark more or less stable at the rate to
● 648 which it had depreciated by 1921, this was effected only at the cost of a large proportion of its reserves. This led to a severe crisis in the autumn of 1924 and the League of Nations was called in to advise.[1]

The restriction of credit which followed on this step enabled Estonia to maintain the stability of the currency at the depreciated rate. For the *de jure* stage of stabilization, appeal was again made to the League in November 1926. Their report[2] recommended the reform of the *Eesti Pank*, and the transfer of the long-term assets it had accumulated through the Government's earlier industrial policy to a specially created Mortgage Institute, both of which recommendations had been made in the earlier report but had not yet been put
648 into effect. The League also advised the introduction of a new
457 currency. To enable these reforms to be realized an international loan was required, and, if the necessary changes were made, the League declared its readiness to allow the loan to be issued under its auspices.

457 The loan was issued in June 1927, £700,000 in London and
652 Amsterdam at 94½, and $4,000,000 in New York at the same price. £1,000,000 of the proceeds went to purchase the long-term assets of the *Eesti Pank*, which were then transferred, as recommended, to
[648] the newly created Mortgage Institute. Efforts were made by the
[453] League to secure some measure of independence for the Central Bank from the State, and the State undertook to sell certain of its shares in the bank.[3] The scope of the bank's lending operations were strictly limited by the new Statutes. It was also granted the monopoly of the note issue, and the legal cover, which had previously been such as to encourage its commercial operations, was to consist as to not less
436 than 40 per cent. of gold or 'gold exchange'. Finally, the parity of
453 the new currency, the Estonian kroon, was fixed at that of the Swedish crown,[4] and the currency was put into circulation at the beginning of 1928.

Once *de jure* stabilization was achieved, the stability of these currencies was maintained throughout the period without recourse to official exchange restrictions. There was also a steady increase in the gold and foreign exchange holdings of the Central Banks, though, except in Lithuania, there was a tendency for reserves to fall towards

[1] The report of the Financial Committee of the League was issued in March, 1925: see League Document C. 240, M. 92, 1925, II.

[2] *Banking and Currency Reform in Estonia, May 25, 1927*: League Document C. 227, M. 89, 1927, II.

[3] According to Kisch and Elkin, op. cit., p. 27, a large proportion of its holding was sold in 1929.

[4] Giving a parity to the gold £ of 18·1595.

been able to export during recent years. The same applies to sugar, at any rate as regards Latvia and Lithuania. By 1936 Latvia was able to dispense with sugar imports entirely, while in Lithuania imports were reduced to 0·4 per cent. of the total value of imports. The corollary to the increase of agricultural production is seen in the increase of imports of chemicals, largely consisting of artificial manure, and of agricultural machinery.

The other more important result of the policy of self-sufficiency is the increase of industrialization. The effect of this movement is shown in the decrease of manufactured textile imports in all three countries, and the general increase of imports of machinery and iron and steel goods proportionately to the total. It is noteworthy, also, that in Latvia, and to a smaller extent in Estonia, there has been an increase in the proportion of imports of raw cotton and wool, and other textile fibres such as hemp and jute; even in Lithuania, by far the least industrialized country of the three, imports of raw cotton and wool amounted to 3·4 per cent. of the total in 1936 as compared with an average of under 1 per cent. in 1928–30. The increase in the proportion of coal and coke imports into Latvia, also, will be noted. Lastly, it may be mentioned that the abandonment of the gold standard by Latvia in September 1936 was followed by the reduction of Customs duties on a number of imports such as petroleum, herrings, and rice, which was dictated principally by the desire to prevent an immediate rise in the cost of living.

Changes in Exports. The economic structure of the Baltic States is not such as to facilitate important changes in the nature of their export trade over a short period. Timber, butter, bacon, and flax continued to be the staple articles of export, though there was in Estonia and Latvia a slight tendency for the proportionate value of these exports to be rather smaller than before the crisis.[1] In both countries, however, there was an increase in the proportion of flax exports, and of paper-making materials. There was also a further decrease in the proportion of exports of manufactured goods. Most of the manufactured articles exported from Estonia and Latvia before the crisis went to the neighbouring countries, which, after 1931, severely restricted their imports of such goods. The most remarkable changes are, perhaps, in Lithuania's exports, namely, the increase in the proportion of butter, bacon, and grain exports,

[1] In October 1936 Latvia decided to adhere to the European Timber Exporters' Convention. The purpose of this body, formed in November 1935, is to adjust supplies to demand at a remunerative level of prices. The other members are Austria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Poland, Rumania, Sweden, the U.S.S.R., and Yugoslavia. For 1937 it was decided to limit exports from these countries to 4,000,000 standards, of which Latvia's share was to be 127,000 standards. During 1938 there is to be a reduction of 15 per cent. in the quota.

Latvia Lithuania

the Estonian kroon, to the sterling *bloc*. The exchange restrictions, however, have not been notably relaxed, and it is still necessary for Latvian importers to obtain an import licence, which usually carries with it a permit to receive exchange, though in practice the restrictions now interfere little with normal commercial transactions.

457 652 458

Lithuania. In Lithuania the immediate effects of the general financial crisis of 1931 were less severe than in the other two countries. The extent of foreign investment in the banking system was smaller, and the withdrawals which took place were not sufficient to lead to any great loss of confidence in the currency. Moreover, the loss on the abandonment of the gold standard in Great Britain was not so large as in Estonia or Latvia, for the gold reserves of the Central Bank were chiefly held in dollars and not in sterling. Thus, although the fall in the volume of foreign trade had been considerable, and there were some domestic withdrawals from the banks, there was no serious flight of capital. Large exports of capital did not, in fact, begin to take place until 1935, and it is significant that, though the current items of the balance of payments had led to an unfavourable balance in 1931 and 1932, and there was a corresponding decrease in the gold and foreign exchange holdings of the *Lietuvos Bankas*, official exchange restrictions were not introduced until October 1935. The inference must be, it would seem, that the reserves accumulated year by year up to 1930 were sufficient to offset current adverse movements, but not to cover a heavy export of capital.

The sudden deterioration of the position in 1935 was largely due [648] ● to extraordinary causes. The dispute with Germany over Memel, as has been seen, led to an almost complete suspension of commercial intercourse with what had been Lithuania's best customer. Moreover, the increase of emigration to Palestine was responsible for capital withdrawals on a fairly considerable scale. Thus, though the Central Bank had avoided a loss on the devaluation of the United States dollar in 1933 by converting most of its dollar holdings into gold or other currencies before the dollar was devalued, its gold and foreign exchange reserves continued to decrease. By the end of September 1935 the margin above the 33⅓ per cent. required as cover for the note issue was negligible, and on October 1 exchange restrictions were at last introduced. With their help the original gold parity of the litas has since been maintained.

It will be asked how this has been possible during a time in which Lithuania's chief competitors in the export market had the advantage of a depreciated currency. The reply seems to be that in Lithuania the fall of prices was greater than in the other two countries, and that,

had to be undertaken, both to the permanent way and to rolling-stock, was large. In some instances it was necessary to lay fresh lines, and where funds could be obtained this was done. By 1930 considerable progress had been made, though the state of the permanent way is often so bad that the times taken even by fast trains over easy ground is comparatively slow.

In August 1924 a railway conference between Estonia, Latvia, and the U.S.S.R. resulted in the decision to unify the existing separate railway conventions on the basis of the International Convention of Berne, and in the signature of nine technical conventions. On October 29, 1925, a convention relating to railway transit traffic was concluded by the same three Powers.[1]

In Estonia on April 1, 1936, there were 891 miles of railway, of which 473 miles were broad gauge, and 418 miles narrow gauge. As much as 254 miles of railway had been constructed since the War. A considerable saving in the running of the railways is now effected by the burning of shale-oil.

In Latvia the post-War difficulties were complicated by the fact that during the German occupation most of the permanent way had been converted to normal or narrow gauge; whereas, if Latvia were to recover her transit trade with Russia, many of the lines would have to be reconverted to Russian gauge. In April 1936 there were 2,023 miles in use, 1,214 miles being of the broad gauge and 198 miles of the normal gauge, the latter relating chiefly to the lines connecting Latvia with Central Europe. In recent years there has been a considerable amount of fresh construction,[2] though none of the lines completed appears to be of outstanding importance.

Lithuania's difficulties were fully as serious as those of Latvia, for Lithuania also had been occupied by the German forces. Moreover, the existing network of railways was far less suited to the requirements of the new State than in the other two cases. The most important of these deficiencies, however, was eliminated by the completion, in 1932, of the only really important piece of fresh construction in the Baltic States since the War, the Siauliai–Telsiai–Kretinga Railway.[3] At the end of 1934 there were 1,152 miles of railway in existence, of which 797 miles were broad gauge.

The comparative position of the three countries can be seen from the following table:

	Square miles of total territory per mile of railway in use	*Millions of ton-kilometres of goods carried by railways in 1936*
Estonia . . .	21	225
Latvia . . .	13	380*
Lithuania . .	19	280

* Excluding transit traffic in foreign trains.

[1] For text see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. lxvi, p. 147.

[2] Details are given in D.O.T.: *Economic Conditions in Latvia, January 1935*, publ. 1935, pp. 33–4.

[3] For the importance of this railway, see p. 101

2: Milosz S-5 (no date)1953 El Europe
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197 that two different languages entered into use there: the masters, that is the landholders, spoke German (in Estonia and Latvia) and Polish (in Lithuania) in part because the newcomers brought with them their own language and customs, and in part because the local nobility adopted them. The common people, however, spoke their native tongue and preserved their cultural heritage from a legendary past. After the First World War, these three countries ceased to be provinces of the Russian Tsardom and became independent. Radical agrarian reforms curbed the influence of the great landowners. The native tongues became the official languages, while literature and education restored popular traditions.

161 241 In 1939, the population of these three states numbered about six million, that is, a little more than the population of Chile, a little less than that of Sweden. They were agricultural countries whose economies were maintained by a well-organized exportation of bacon, eggs, butter, grain, and fowl to Western Europe. In this, as well as in other respects, they resembled Denmark. Whoever knows the patterns of farming life can easily picture the mode of existence of these Baltic regions. A widespread system of 511 cooperatives helped the farmer sell his products. His standard of living, judging by his appearance, his house and his diet, was higher than that of the Slavonic countries, 162 with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia. Most Es- 186 tonians and Latvians were Protestant; most Lithuanians, Catholic. All three nations were characterized by obstinate patriotism, or even chauvinism—which is understandable in terms of their hard past. Militarily, all three were defenseless.

175 ● 648 The fate of these states was decided in the talks between Molotov and Ribbentrop. In the fall of 1939, Molotov demanded military bases; the Baltic governments hurried

2: Milosz S-5 (no date)1953 El Europe
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to grant them. (The press of all three countries consecrated much space, at the time, to articles proclaiming lasting, unshakeable friendship for the kind and powerful neighbor to the East.) In June 1940, on the pretext that Soviet soldiers stationed in these bases had not been assured proper security, the Red Army crossed the borders of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the NKVD moved into power, and all former state machinery ceased to exist.

My account of the Baltic states is not derived from books or manuscripts. The first sunlight I saw, my first smell of the earth, my first tree, were the sunlight, smell, and tree of these regions; for I was born there, of Polish-speaking parents, beside a river that bore a Lithuanian name. I am familiar with the events of the past years not from the dry notes of historians; they are as vivid for me as the faces and eyes of people one knows well.

The invasion of the Spanish must have been an appalling experience for the Aztecs. The customs of the conquerors were incomprehensible; their religious ceremonies, strange; the paths of their thought, impossible to follow. The invasion of the Red Army was no less of a shock for the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians. Of course, the older people remembered the days of the Tsars; yet this was completely different, and much worse. In the years that had elapsed since the fall of Tsarism, Russia had not evolved closer toward Europe but further away, toward principles of social organization Europe had never before known. The thinking and reactions of these conquerors were just as alien to the conquered as the arcanum of Catholic theology and the Castilian concept of honor had been to the Aztecs.

New general elections were ordered immediately. But these elections had nothing in common with the elections held before then. There was a single list of candidates,

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in the Soviet Union itself prior to the War against Hitler. They are almost wholly isolated. Information concerning the cultural life of the Albanian people is limited to what can be obtained from broadcasts over the government radio station.

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Hoxha did not join forces with Marshal Tito when that leader broke with the Kremlin, but was soon made aware that Albania was wholly isolated and that his Yugoslav neighbor gave asylum to dissidents who plotted a *coup d'état*. That such an undertaking might well meet with success seems probable. But Italy retains its interest in the strategic and economic advantages of the Albanian area, and its assent would be required; and currently, with the struggle for Trieste in the foreground, no entente is conceivable. The Russians apparently maintain a small body of troops in the vicinity of Tirana, but have in no other wise manifested great concern. Apparently they consider Hoxha a negligible problem child. It is apparent, however, that the Russian garrison makes impossible any attempt to overthrow the dictatorship from within the country.

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The fate of the three erstwhile Baltic Republics—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—illustrates the sad truth that in troubled and imperialistic parts of the world it does not pay to be a small nation. Each of the three had a solid folk or tribal core round which language, mores, and religious tradition had developed. For brief periods each managed to acquire a precarious independence. But they lay along the great Baltic seacoast route from Western Europe. German colonization efforts, spearheaded by the Teutonic Knights, went this way, and later came solidly entrenched land barons. There were periods of Swedish and Polish domination. Finally, as a result of the Treaty of Nystad, which in 1721 ended the Swedish

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648 wars, and of the Third Partition of Poland, all three coun-
175 tries were ceded to Russia. At first the Czars governed rather benevolently, but by the middle of the nineteenth century the three had been absorbed into the "Northwest Territory"; and stern measures of Russification were resorted to. In Lithuania, for example, only Russian might be spoken. Monastic schools were closed. The Polish and Lithuanian languages were forbidden. Many thousands of persons were deported.

648 After World War I broke out, the three suffered by reason
726 of the wavering fortunes of the belligerents. In 1918 they
175 were the scene of sanguinary fighting between remnants of the German army, invading Bolshevik troops, and hastily formed armies of national liberation. The Poles also intervened. Finally, however, all three states were declared independent, and governments were formed. A period of uneasy tranquillity followed, but the predominatingly peasant population achieved a measure of prosperity. Then the Pact of August, 1939, between Stalin and Hitler and the subsequent erasure of Poland from the map of Europe inaugurated intense tribulation along the Baltic. Germans were evacuated from Latvia and Estonia. All three Republics were compelled to sign agreements with Russia permitting the establishment of military bases. Thousands fled, and countless other thousands were deported. Next came the aftermath of the Nazi declaration of war on Russia. In a very short time Hitler had the Baltic coasts under his heel, and the expulsion and liquidation of Jews began. Finally the German armies retreated, the Russians entered, and the status of the "Northwest Territory" was restored.

642 Elections followed, and as a matter of course pro-Com-
794 munist governments were established. It should be noted that only in Estonia had a native minority of any size favored the Communist cause. Moreover, the religious affiliations of the